THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

FOUNDED, A.D. 1821

THE GREAT PIONEER FAMILY PAPER OF AMERICA.

Vol. 67. PUBLICATION OFFICE No. 725 SANSOM ST. PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 1888. $2.00 A YEAR IN ADVANCE. FIVE CENTS A COPY. No. 42

WITHER AWAY.

BY T. HAYNES BAYLEY.

Wither away, green leaves,
Wither away, sweet flowers;
For me in vain young Spring has thrown
Her mantle o'er the bowers.

Wither away, my friends,
Whom I have loved sincerely;
'Tis hard to sigh for the silent tomb
As a place of rest, so early!

While others prize the rose,
The cypress wreath I'll gather;
The heart recoils from Pleasure's voice
When all its fond hopes wither.

HER MAD REVENGE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PENKIVEL," "OLIVE VARCOE," "WITH THIS RING I WED THEE," ETC.

CHAPTER XII.

A FEW minutes rapid walking brought Alick Holt and his companions to the village, at the entrance to which the station-master left them, and bidding them a quiet good-night, entered his cottage, where a light was burning. No other lights were visible in the village, save this one, and those in two or three windows of a large house midway up the long, irregular street of which Derdignon consisted, and which the young Englishman judged to be the inn.

"This seems a curious place to stay at, at this season," the young lawyer said, discontentedly, as he walked on.

"It was the only thing we could do, sir," answered his companion. "Mrs. Hamilton was very ill, and utterly unable to continue her journey, and we were obliged to remain. It was my poor mistress' anxiety to reach Paris, which made her start from the South when she was not strong enough for the journey, and she was so ill in the train that it was absolutely necessary to break the journey here."

"That was unfortunate," Alick remarked. "You are the courier, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, Michael Hardy, at your service," he replied respectfully. "I have been in Mrs. Hamilton's employ for some years—she travelled a great deal."

He sighed sorrowfully as he spoke, probably at the thought of losing so good a mistress; then he said cheerfully, as he stopped his brisk walk:

"Here is the inn, sir. You must be glad to reach it, I should think, after so long a journey."

"I am very glad," Alick answered, honestly.

He was beginning to feel the fatigue, amounting almost to exhaustion, of the long and wearisome traveling; and, notwithstanding his rapid walk, he felt chilled to the bone, almost benumbed, indeed, with intense cold.

The inn was a larger place than the young lawyer had expected to find in so small a village, but, as he learned afterwards, Derdignon had been a place of some importance in the old coaching days, when the Auberge du Cheval Blanc was full of life and bustle and animation. Now the old house showed evident signs of the decayed conditions of its fortunes,; it felt bare and cold and empty, as Mrs. Hamilton's courier led Mr. Holt through a deserted yard into a large brick-paved kitchen, where a poorly-plenished wood fire was smouldering.

The place was spotlessly clean, but it was plainly to be seen that the occupants were poor. None of the rough plenty of some country inns was visible there.

The floor was sanded, the hearth carefully swept up; the flowered chintz flouncing round the tall mantel, and the curtains of the bed, which stood in one corner, were fresh and neat; the dresser was gay with quaint, coarse pottery and old copper pans and vessels; but the stamp of poverty seemed set upon the entire place, and the lawyer shuddered a little as he glanced around him.

He was tired, cold—almost exhausted, and he felt dazed and bewildered as he came from the cold and darkness of the winter night into the comparative warmth and light of the kitchen, although the only warmth came from the smouldering hearth, and the only light from a lamp which burned on the spotless expanse of the deal table.

Two women were standing by the fire. One of them was making coffee and merely noticed their entrance by glancing carelessly over her shoulder without ceasing her employment; the other turned with a start at the sound of the opening door, and, after a scarcely-perceptible hesitation, advanced to meet the two men.

She was a good-looking woman, hardly past middle-age, well, but plainly, dressed, and wearing a large white apron, like those worn by professional nurses.

As she crossed the kitchen, her eyes went with a questioning glance from the courier's dark, intelligent face to the young lawyer's, where they rested with a somewhat intent gaze.

"This is Mrs. Hamilton's confidential maid, sir," the courier said quietly, as he put the young lawyer's valise upon the table. "This gentleman is Mr. Holt, Mrs. Mason."

Mrs. Mason curtseyed respectfully.

"I am afraid you have had a very cold journey, sir," she said, in a low, hurried voice, and in a somewhat nervous manner. "My poor mistress has been most anxious for your arrival."

"I am glad that I have arrived in time," Alick answered. "This is a very out-of-the-way place, and difficult to get at, is it not? How is Mrs. Hamilton? From what I heard at the station I did not expect to find her alive."

His voice showed the exhaustion inevitable after such a long and wearisome journey, while the maid, looking keenly at him, saw how pale and travel-worn he seemed.

"At the station?" repeated Mrs. Mason, turning toward the fire with a rather nervous gesture. "Did you meet the doctor there, sir?"

"No, I understood from the station-master that the doctor's left this afternoon," he replied, "and that they feared Mrs. Hamilton had but a short time to live then. But," he added, pushing his hair from his forehead with a gesture of weariness, "I have so little knowledge of French that I may easily have been mistaken."

"Ah!"—it seemed, as she turned towards him again, as if a look of relief had crossed her face, but it was so evanescent, and Mr. Holt was so confused that he could not be sure that he had not imagined it was there. "You do not speak French, sir. Then I fear you have found the journey a very wearisome one."

"Yes; but the weariness is of no account, since I have reached here in time," the young man answered. "Is Mrs. Hamilton able to see me now?" he continued. "My uncle was grieved not to be able to come himself. You received our telegram, of course?"

"Yes, sir," she replied, with the same curious hesitation in her manner which had characterized it once before. "My mistress regretted Mr. Clark's illness, but she was grateful for his prompt attention to her letter. She did not recall your name; she did not remember having seen you before, sir," she added, looking at him furtively.

"I am quite a stranger to Mrs. Hamilton," Alick answered quietly. "It is not many years since I became a member of my uncle's firm; but as he could not come himself, he preferred to send me to sending one of his clerks, thinking Mrs. Hamilton would feel more confidence. Will you see if she can receive me now?" he added. "I should like, if she is able, to have a little conversation with her."

"She will see you in a few minutes, sir," she replied calmly. "Madame Lamotte is making you some coffee; it will be ready immediately. Perhaps Hardy has told you, sir," she continued, in a more assured manner, "that my mistress' strength failed her on her journey, and we were obliged to stop here. She rallied a little after a few days' rest, and she wrote to Mr. Clark then, fully explaining her wishes."

"My uncle received her letter, and almost immediately after, the telegram announcing Mrs. Hamilton's dangerous condition," the young lawyer said quietly. "I presume, Mrs. Mason," he added, looking questioningly at her, "that you are in Mrs. Hamilton's confidence?"

"My mistress has no secrets from me, sir," she answered readily. "I know the contents of her letter, and her anxiety has been very great, lest you should not arrive in time. You have brought the will I hope, sir?" she added earnestly.

"Oh! yes," the lawyer answered. "But are you sure that Mrs. Hamilton adheres still to the wish she expressed in her letter to my uncle?"

Mrs. Mason's lips tightened.

"I am quite sure, sir," she rejoined, respectfully but very firmly. "She wishes to make Miss Stanley her heiress, as she wrote to Mr. Clark; her intention has not wavered in the least."

"You are sure?"

"I am certain, sir. Moreover, having been constantly with her, I know that her decision has remained unaltered even for a moment. Indeed, her anxiety for your arrival has been so great, chiefly because she feared you might not arrive in time, and that Mr. Geoffrey Hamilton would inherit under the will she made in his favor long ago."

"It appeared to my uncle that Mr. Geoffrey Hamilton ought to inherit at least a fair share of his aunt's wealth," remarked Alick coldly.

Something in the woman's manner—nervous yet eager, decisive yet suppressed—made him feel something akin to distrust. If he had been less fatigued, he might have had his perceptions more keenly alive, and have detected that Geoffrey Hamilton had not a friend in Mrs. Hamilton's confidential maid.

"Not his aunt's, sir, begging your pardon," she said quickly. "Mr. Hamilton was Mr. Geoffrey's uncle, but there is no relationship between him and my mistress, and my mistress did not derive her fortune from her husband."

"I am quite aware of that," the young lawyer said irritably, wishing in his heart that he had some of his uncle's *sang froid* and composure to oppose to this woman's calm assertion and the assurance which had characterized her manner during the last few minutes; "but at one time your mistress had sufficient interest in and affection for Mr. Geoffrey Hamilton to make him her sole heir, and my uncle, as an old friend of Mrs. Hamilton's, regrets the apparent injustice of passing him over entirely."

"My mistress had reason, and good reason, for altering her first intention, sir," replied Mrs. Mason, just as respectfully but just as firmly as before. "I am sure if Mr. Geoffrey got her money, she would not rest in her grave."

There was something passionate, almost vindictive, in the way she uttered the last words, which the young lawyer scarcely noticed at the time, but which he remembered afterwards.

"You are sure, then, of what you say," he said wearily, as he advanced towards the table, where the inn-keeper's wife was putting a thick, earthenware bowl for the fragrant coffee which she had prepared. "My uncle hoped to prevail upon Mrs. Hamilton to take a more just view of the case. Miss Stanley is a stranger——"

"Miss Stanley is all the world to my mistress," Mrs. Mason interrupted him hurriedly. "She loves her better than she has ever loved anyone in all the world. And I beg of you sir," she added earnestly, yet with some authority in her voice, "not to distress my dear mistress by any discussion or opposition. She wrote fully to Mr. Clark, and she will retract nothing that she said to him. And her intense desire to sign this will which makes Miss Mabel her heiress has enabled her, I firmly believe, to live longer than she otherwise would have done."

For a minute Alick Holt looked at her steadily and questioningly. She met his gaze unflinchingly, preserving an unshaken equanimity of manner. She was pale, certainly, but not more so than seemed natural after close attention in a sick-room; she spoke with a certain refinement, yet without any assertion of equality, carefully retaining her respectful manner throughout all their conversation.

"Your coffee is ready, sir," she said; then quietly moving one of the wooden chairs close to the table, "While you are taking it I will go and see if my mistress is ready to receive you. She was dozing when I left her half an hour ago."

"Miss Stanley shares your nursing, I presume?" the young man said as he seated himself at the table.

"Miss Stanley never left my mistress, day or night, until——" she paused abruptly, and a sudden hot flush rose to her face. Then she went on hurriedly, "until she was so exhausted that she could scarcely stand up."

She hurried out of the kitchen as if she feared further questioning.

Alick tasted the coffee rather absently, for the maid's manner had struck him as strange; but the excellence of the beverage, which was strong, fragrant, delicious, as only French coffee is, aroused him to his need of refreshment. He drank thirstily now, putting down the empty bowl with a sigh of satisfaction.

"There's nothing so refreshing as a good draught of *café au lait*, is there, sir?" remarked the courier, who had left the kitchen during the lawyer's conversation with Mrs. Mason, but now returned. "Your room is ready, sir, if you would prefer to wash now. I have taken in some warm water."

"Thank you," Alick replied heartily, as he rose, "I shall be glad to do so."

"I will show you the way then, sir. Follow me, please."

Even the feeble light of the kitchen became brilliant when compared to that afforded by the candle which Hardy carried, as he preceded the young lawyer out of the kitchen into a stone-paved passage and up a steep wooden staircase, of which this solitary candle was the sole illumination: but Alick was getting used to the dim light now, and he groped his way without any mishap.

He followed the man up to a room on the first floor, which had evidently been prepared for him, for his portmanteau and bag were there and another candle burned on the table. Here, too, the extreme clean-

liness strove vainly to conceal the bareness of the surroundings, but the young lawyer could not forbear a longing look at the spotless white bed with its chintz curtains, which seemed so tempting after the long winter nights in the cars.

"Can I unpack for you, sir?" Hardy inquired respectfully.

Alick gave him his keys, and, throwing himself into a rush-bottom chair, watched the courier abstractedly, while he took out his dressing things, and even placed them ready upon the table.

"Mrs. Mason has been a long time in Mrs. Hamilton's service?" he said, rousing himself with an effort when Hardy announced that all was ready, and turned to leave the room.

"A great many years, sir," the courier answered. "Twenty, I believe."

"So long? Then she must be more like a friend than a servant?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, sir. Mrs. Hamilton has entire confidence in her."

"I suppose so; and she has a good deal of influence, no doubt?"

Hardy smiled.

"Yes, sir," he answered, in a tone which said a good deal.

"Do you know whether she has any reason for disliking Mr. Geoffrey Hamilton?" Alick asked.

An expression of surprise crossed the man's keen, dark face.

"I know of none, sir," he said promptly.

"Thank you—that will do. Will you tell Mrs. Mason that I am ready at any moment to go to her mistress?"

Left alone, Alick Holt effaced as far as he could, with the scanty means at hand, the stains of travel and fatigue. He felt somewhat refreshed when he had finished his dressing operations, but the long, sleepless nights and harassing worries of the cross-country journey would not be overcome, save by a long night's rest, although at the moment he was too preoccupied to remember his fatigue.

"Uncle Unwin will imagine that I did not do as much as I should," he muttered, as he brushed his dark hair before the little glass upon the wall. "'But if she will, she will,' and Hamilton must grin and bear it. Perhaps the girl may have qualms of conscience by-and-bye, and share with him. Let us hope so. It will be rather a sell for him, poor beggar!"

He opened his bag and selected the wills from among the papers it contained. Two had been drawn up by Mr. Clark's orders, one according to Mrs. Hamilton's request, the other according to his own notions of justice and equity. As his nephew took them out, glancing carelessly over them by the dim candle light, a slight smile crossed his lips.

"I wonder if it would be a crime to substitute one for the other," he said to himself, and at the same moment a knock at the room door made him start slightly.

He opened it hurriedly; Mrs. Mason was upon the threshold, and even by the dim light he saw that she was pale and tremulous.

"My mistress is ready to see you, sir," she said huskily. "There is no time to be lost."

"I will come at once," he said, and followed her from the room.

As they crossed the landing, the wintry wind, increasing in violence as the night wore on, made the old windows rattle noisily, and swept against the panes a shower of swiftly falling snow.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE room into which Alick followed his conductress, was a large one, and but dimly and feebly lighted by two candles upon the mantel-piece, which only made darkness visible in their immediate neighborhood, and left the other end of the room in shadowy gloom. But by this time the young man had got accustomed to the insufficient *eclairage*, and while, if he had come out of a gas-lit room into this one, he could have distinguished nothing, he was able, by the feeble illumination, to see what the room contained, as well as its occupants.

There was an alcove at one end, which probably contained a bed, but the doors were closed, and the dying woman was lying propped up by pillows, in a bed at the further end, near the wide old hearth, where a wood fire burned feebly, smouldering in its white ashes. There were three windows in the room, but over these the flimsy chintz curtains were drawn, in a futile effort to exclude the wintry wind, which shook their folds, and made them move slowly to and fro in a ghost-like manner.

There were some travelling trunks in the room; and some handsome fur travelling rugs thrown here and there prevented it having the bare appearance of the other apartments of the Auberge du Cheval Blanc.

Mrs. Mason placed the candle she had been carrying upon the dressing-table, lighting up the costly and beautiful toilet necessities which were scattered there: handsome ivory-backed brushes, scent bottles of richly-tinted Bohemian glass, with gold tops; hand-glasses, gold-handled scissors, a ring stand, with glittering gems upon it; and a large photograph in a chased silver frame, placed so that the eyes of the dying woman could rest upon it as she lay propped up on her pillows.

It chanced that the maid, putting down the candlestick, had placed it—accidentally, doubtless—so that its light fell upon the photograph; and Alick, glancing at it involuntarily, found his eyes resting upon it with sudden interest and admiration. It was a portrait of a girl, dressed in white, with a broad black sash confining the soft folds of her gown at the waist, standing against the sombre background of a heavy velvet curtain.

She was beautiful, with a beauty which looked dark and foreign in style in the photograph—which was a remarkably fine one—clear, yet exquisitely soft; but it was not her beauty which had attracted Alick Holt's scrutiny and kept his eyes fixed upon her face; it was the earnest, intense almost tragic expression of the dark eyes which seemed to meet his own as they looked out of the dainty silver frame.

For a minute he stood mute and motionless, staring at it; then he recovered himself with a start, and moved his gaze from it, only to rest it on the original of the photograph, who was coming slowly towards him from the bedside.

He knew her at a glance. The photograph was too good a likeness to leave him in any doubt, and he felt himself change color as the beautiful, tragic eyes rested on his face.

Dim as the light was, he could distinguish the lovely features, the sweet tremulous lips, and the grace with which she carried her little dark head; she was dressed in white, soft, colorless folds of some thick woolen stuff which fell around her as she moved noiselessly towards him, bringing with her a faint, sweet fragrance of heliotrope.

"Mr. Holt?" she said, in a low, steady tone, so low that it was scarcely above a whisper, yet so distinct that it seemed as if it must be audible in the farthest corner of the shadowy room.

Alick bowed; he had not yet quite recovered his self-possession, and could find no words of greeting just then.

"Mrs. Hamilton has been anxiously awaiting you," she went on, in the same, low, clear tones. "You have obeyed her instructions, I suppose, about——" she hesitated slightly before concluding, and then continued, "about the will?"

"Certainly," Alick answered quietly. "I have the will here. However much my uncle regretted Mrs. Hamilton's decision, as her lawyer he could do nothing but carry out her instructions."

The girl's dark eyes met his steadily in the dim light of the shadowy room.

"Mr. Clark regretted Mrs. Hamilton's decision?" she said quietly.

"Yes, bitterly."

A slow, faint smile—a smile which had a touch of bitterness in it—parted the girl's lips for a fleeting moment.

"That is unfortunate," she said quietly, "since her decision is unaltered and will remain so."

The young man bowed. He was sorry for Geoffrey Hamilton, whom he knew slightly, but he felt he was powerless to alter a decision so firmly resolved upon.

The white-robed figure turned away, and with a slight gesture of command moved towards the bed near which Mrs. Mason was standing; the lawyer followed, carrying the paper which was to make the girl before him one of the richest heiresses in England.

Very little of the dim candle-light reached the bed, and what little there was, was carefully screened off by the voluminous chintz curtains with which it was hung.

Mrs. Mason moved one of these partly aside as they drew near, and Alick saw a slight figure, wrapped in shawls and propped up with pillows, lying on the bed, over which a rich Indian shawl had been cast as a coverlet; but the heavy shadow of the curtains and of the cap which Mrs. Hamilton wore prevented him distinguishing her features; he could see however, that she was very pale.

"I regret your uncle's illness," said a low, husky voice faintly. "It was kind of him to send you. You—" she paused, as if to take breath, "have brought this will which makes Mabel my sole heiress?"

"Yes," Alick Holt answered gently, amazed and relieved to find that she seemed by no means so weak as he had expected, and wondering whether these French doctors—for whom he felt the popular insular contempt—could have made a mistake as to the near termination of her illness. "My uncle regretted his illness most sincerely, Mrs. Hamilton, since but for it he could have come to you himself. I am sorry," the young man added in his kind voice, "to find you so ill."

She inclined her head slightly.

"My instructions have been carefully carried out?" she asked faintly, and breathing rather heavily, as if with some effort at self-control.

"Certainly," he replied quickly. "But my uncle hoped that you would reconsider your decision."

He had not meant to appeal to her, but she seemed so much stronger than than he expected that he could not refrain; the words seemed to rise unbidden to his lips.

"Sir!" Mrs. Mason said warningly, as she hurriedly advanced.

Mrs. Hamilton feebly moved her head, making a negative movement.

"Discussion will only distress me needlessly," she said, still breathing heavily. "Kindly read the will, sir, and let me sign it."

Alick bowed in silence, and unfolded the paper in his hand. Mrs. Mason bent over her mistress, arranging her pillows. In the dim light the young lawyer saw the ghastly pallor of Mrs. Hamilton's face, and the strange brightness of her sunken eyes. Miss Stanley, moving softly, like a ghost in her long white gown, went round to the other side of the bed and stood there, concealed from Alick's gaze by the chintz bed curtains; only her hand was visible, and the young man saw that it trembled perceptibly.

The silence was profound in its intense stillness as Alick began to read; but the silence only reigned within; outside, in the winter night, the wind roared and the snow fell heavily.

The will was but a short one, since it contained but that one bequest: all Mrs. Hamilton died possessed of she left to Mabel Stanley, knowing—so she had directed it to be worded—that her beloved adopted daughter would make fitting acknowledgment to her faithful servants, as she would have done herself. The young lawyer's pleasant voice sounded very cold as he read it in the silence, with the sick lady's glittering eyes upon his face.

When he had finished, a short pause ensued, then Alick bent forward and addressed Mrs. Hamilton.

"I should not be fulfilling my uncle's trust," he said gently, "if I failed to make one last appeal to you, Mrs. Hamilton. It may seem persumption to you, but I know that you regard my uncle as not only your lawyer, but your friend, and you must try to fancy that he is speaking to you by my voice. Forgive me if I ask you once more to remember that Mr. Geoffrey Hamilton has some slight claim upon you, and your wealth is large enough to bear division without any injustice to this lady."

"Do you know Mr. Geoffrey Hamilton?"

Mrs. Hamilton's hoarse, failing voice uttered the words almost harshly.

"I know him but slightly."

"Then it were better that you should know him even less," she answered slowly. "He is a bad man. Mason, give me a pen and ink."

"I am sorry to have failed," the young lawyer said sorrowfully.

"You would not be," was the faintly spoken answer, as she sank back on her pillows. "You would not be if you knew all."

Alick bowed in silence, he had done what he could and failed; he drew back from the bedside to give place to Mrs. Mason, who approached holding a blotting book and gold-topped inkstand. Even in his disappointment Alick dreamily noticed the smell of the Russian leather which cased the blotting book, and the elaborate monogram in raised gold letters upon it.

All this time the girl on the other side of the bed had stood motionless, concealed behind the gaudy chintz curtains, but now she leant slightly forward; where she stood it was so dark that it was impossible to see how deathly pale she was, and how her dark eyes burned in her white face, but the young man wondered whether the hurried, almost gasping breathing which came from that direction was hers or that of the dying woman on the bed. As Mrs. Mason drew near the bedside, the girl came slowly round, moving like a person in a dream, and pressing both hands to her heart.

Glancing at her now in the fuller light, Alick Holt saw her livid pallor and strange uncertain movements. Just as he was about to speak to her, to ask if she were ill, the sick woman spoke.

"I am ready," she said hoarsely.

He carried the will to her bedside and gently indicated the place where she was to sign. In the semi-darkness of the shadow cast by the bed curtains she looked up at him.

"You and Mason can witness," she said feebly, and he saw that her hands were shaking violently; well shaped hands they were, neither shrivelled or withered by ill health and suffering.

Mrs. Mason raised her mistress from the pillows and supported her in silence. Mr. Holt brought one of the candles and held it so that the light fell on the blue paper under the shaking hands; he remembered afterwards that the sick woman's face and form which had remained in the shadow, which was deepened by the maid's form as she bent over her mistress.

So tremulous were the feeble hands that once the pen dropped from them and rolled away. Alick caught it and gently replaced it in the unsteady hand; it seemed to him that Mrs. Hamilton had grown suddenly and startlingly weak.

"It must have been her intense desire to do this which gave her strength until now," he thought pityingly. "She is evidently very ill, poor woman! What can Geoffrey Hamilton have done to offend her so bitterly?"

She had the pen now between her trembling fingers, and had commenced to write her name, slowly and laboriously. For a moment Alick Holt watched the shaking hand, then, involuntarily, he glanced from Mrs. Hamilton to the girl who would be made so rich by the writing of that dying woman's name.

She was standing a few feet from the bed. Her eyes were full of a strange expression—half horror, half exultation; there was not a trace of color in her face or lips. She stood motionless as a statue, so still that she hardly seemed to breathe.

Her glance was fixed upon the feeble hands which moved so slowly over the paper, and her hands, clenched so tightly that they looked bloodless, were pressed close to her side. It seemed as if some horror—some great fear, held her spell-bound.

Having signed her name, Mrs. Hamilton sank back upon her pillows, breathing heavily, with closed eyes and pallid lips. Mrs. Mason did not move from her side until the young lawyer had removed the will and taken it to the table to add his own signature; then she turned away for a moment, hurriedly took up a glass which stood beside the bed, and put it to her mistress's lips.

She drank some of the contents without opening her eyes, and Mason drew the curtains so that the light was shaded from its occupant.

"You will sign here, if you please," the young lawyer said quietly, as the maid came up to the table, and in her turn she wrote her name in a bold, clear, characteristic handwriting, under his own.

All this time Mabel Stanley had stood motionless, as if turned to stone, but when Alick looked up from his completed testament, he saw that the frozen calm of her face had melted suddenly and strangely. All the exultation had faded from her eyes, leaving only the horror; her lips were parted and shaking, so that speech was impossible, yet she seemed to try and speak, although no sound escaped her trembling lips, and as Alick instinctively advanced toward her she suddenly put out her hand, with a gesture of entreaty.

"No, no, no!" he heard her say, in a faint hoarse voice, as she swayed suddenly forward, and before he could interfere she had fallen at his feet,—white, cold, inanimate,—in a dead faint.

There was a strange, sudden exclamation from the dying woman. Mrs. Mason hurried to the beside, and as she went, she glanced back over her shoulders at Alick Holt, who, anxious and startled, was bending over the swooning girl.

"Take her away, sir," she said, in a low, swift tone. "Her room is just opposite this; lay her upon the bed. I will send help in a moment! It is nothing but a faint: she will be better out of this room. Take her away, I beg of you."

CHAPTER XIV.

WITH his heart throbbing fast, and a sense of confusion and suppressed excitement upon him, Alick Holt lifted the unconscious girl and carried her out of the room on to the wide landing outside, which was but feebly lighted by a lamp fixed to the whitewashed walls.

Standing there, he tried for a moment to

recover his composure and to lose the strange sense of unreality which made him feel as if he were in a dream, or the witness of a strange little drama, in which, from a spectator, he had suddenly been converted into an actor.

But it was impossible yet; he felt confused, bewildered, unreal, and this was not a favorable time for reasoning himself into calmness and reality.

The girl in his arms was perfectly insensible; her head had fallen helplessly back upon his shoulder; her face was upturned, the dim light of the lamp falling full upon its pale beauty; her eyes were closed; her long dark lashes rested heavily upon her white cheek; her pale lips were slightly parted; her hand hung at her side, helpless and inert; her loosened hair strayed over his shoulder; one perfumed tress had swept across his lips as he lifted her from the ground, thrilling him with a strange, sudden thrill, which was not without sweetness.

Looking down at her as she lay upon his shoulder—chill, white, motionless—the young man stood still for a few minutes. The door of the room opposite was ajar, but he did not move towards it; he was in no hurry to get rid of this beautiful, helpless burden.

The sweet scent of heliotrope which came from her hair always recalled that moment to him, and he never inhaled its fragrance without seeing again the bare, cold landing, with the dimly-burning lamp on the whitewashed walls, whose light fell upon the upturned face lying so pale upon his shoulder.

As he stood there he fancied he heard the sound of voices in the room he had just left, and he recalled that fancy, too, in the days to come. It made no impression upon him then, but when he remembered it, he wondered that it had not done so; now he heeded nothing but the pure, pale face upon his shoulder, and the faint, almost imperceptible throb of her heart against his own.

How beautiful she was, the young man thought with quickened pulses and fast-throbbing heart; what sweet, tender lips she had, and what long, dark lashes. And she was sweet, and pure, and good as she was beautiful. She had not willingly agreed in the disinheriting of Geoffrey Hamilton, he was sure of that; she could not be mercenary or stoop to baseness to obtain wealth. Some lines he had read flashed across Alick's mind as he looked at her—

"Sure, nothing ill could live in such a temple."

And then, as he held her in his arms, it seemed as if a shudder shook the girl's slender frame, and a quiver moved the long dark lashes, and with a little start the young man roused himself and carried her slowly and tenderly across the landing to that half-opened door.

For a moment he hesitated to enter the little room, but the quiver of the slight form decided him. He entered and placed her on the low, white bed, which was just visible by the light of the lamp on the landing, without which glimmer the room would have been in utter darkness.

The young lawyer looked about him dubiously; he could not leave her alone in this darkness to recover from her swoon, he must get a light and obtain some assistance. It would terrify her doubtless, to find herself alone with a stranger on her recovery. He opened the door wide to obtain as much light as possible from the lamp outside, and taking his little silver match-box from his pocket, struck one of the vestas it contained. By its light he discovered a pair of candles on the dressing-table, and those he lighted. The room was a small one, and the two candles made quite a respectable illumination in the narrow limits.

Timidly, and with his heart beating faster than that well-regarded organ had ever throbbed before, he stole on tiptoe to the bedside, where the white figure lay motionless on the still white bed. It gave no sign of returning consciousness, and so still and deathlike was her appearance, that Alick's fast beating heart stood still for a moment, in a terrible fear, and his face grew as colorless as the girl's own. He stood spell-bound by that great fear for a few moments, then he drew slightly back.

"Not dead!" he said aloud. "Good heavens, she cannot be dead!"

A voice behind him, a women's voice, low, calm, and steady, reassured him.

"She has only fainted, sir; she will be better presently."

Alick turned quickly, unable to repress a nervous start. A woman he had not seen before had noiselessly entered the room and approached the bed.

She was dressed in black, and wore a large white nursing apron similar to that worn by Mrs. Mason; her manner was quite composed and calm, but her hands were not quite steady, as, bending over the insensible girl, she gently put away the falling hair from her face.

Alick Holt looked at her in some astonishment. She had entered the room so quietly that she might have suddenly started up through the floor for all he knew to the contrary; but her manner was quiet, respectful, and assured, as if she were in her own proper place, performing her usual duties.

She was a slight, middle-aged woman, more refined in appearance than Mrs. Mason, yet with a deferential manner that showed plainly that her position in life was a subordinate one.

As he glanced at her, something familiar in her face gave the young lawyer the idea that he had seen it before. She met his questioning glance for a moment, then bent her eyes upon the beautiful face upon the pillows.

"I am Dorcas Fane, sir," she said quietly, "Miss Stanley's maid. I understand exactly what to do for her. My young mistress has not been very strong lately, and her close attendance on Mrs. Hamilton has weakened her a good deal."

"I am very glad you are here," Alick said honestly. "I was wondering where I could obtain assistance. Is this an ordinary fainting fit?" he added anxiously. "It looks so terribly like death!"

"Miss Mabel has fainted once or twice before, sir," Mrs. Fane answered calmly. "Thank you for your kind help! I need not detain you any longer, sir," she added, as she moved to the table, and came back with one of the bottles which stood there; "and I thing there is nothing now to keep you from the rest you so much need."

Alick turned reluctantly away; as he reached the door he turned for a last look at the beautiful pale face, which had so impressed him.

Mrs. Fane was bathing the white brow with some strong essence, a faint shade of color was creeping back into the pale lips.

"You will let me know how she is?" he said earnestly, but in a subdued voice, and Mrs. Fane made a little affirmative gesture of her head, without looking around. Mabel's dark lashes were slowly raising themselves from the white cheek, and her lips were quivering as he left the room, closing the door carefully behind him.

Like a man walking in his sleep, or under the influence of a very vivid dream, Alick Holt returned to his room, and throwing himself into a chair, buried his head in his hands.

The strange, unreal feeling which had held him captive since he arrived at this queer old *auberge*, with its wide, bare rooms and rattling window panes, seemed to increase, until his confusion and bewilderment were indescribable.

The events of the last few hours passed before him in succession, like the scenes of a play or the pictures of a panorama, without the slightest semblance of reality about them. It seemed as if he had taken an important part in the sorrowful episode of human life which was taking place at the Auberge du Cheval Blanc.

He recalled his arrival at the station in the darkness and solitude of the early winter's night; the gruff station-master, whose words announcing as they had seemed to do, Mrs. Hamilton's death, had given him such a shock; the meeting with the courier, Richard Hardy, who had told him Mrs. Hamilton still lived; the cold walk to the inn, with the pitiless blast cutting like a knife and driving the snow in his face; the bare, clean kitchen, with its smouldering fire and lamp; and the confidential maid who seemed so well aware of her mistress's wishes and desires.

Then came that brief interval of rest and refreshment before his introduction to Mrs. Hamilton, and as he thought, the young man rose from his seat and began to pace the room, still in deep meditation. What had occurred was beginning to seem more real to him now; half-an-hour's quiet in the solitude of this bare cold room, where the silence was only broken by the rattling of the loose windows in their ill-fitting frames, had restored his shaken nerves to something like composure.

What a strange, weird scene was that one which he had witnessed in the spacious bedroom, with its many windows and its poor bare furniture, which contrasted so strangely with the costly fur rugs, the gold-topped Bohemian glass bottles, the ivory-backed brushes which spoke of the wealth and refinement of the occupant of the room!

He could see them all now in the mental picture he recalled so vividly. He remembered the smouldering fire, the flaring candles, the photograph in its beautifully shaped silver frame, the diamonds flashing from the rings on the ring-stand, the dimly visible shadowy figure propped up against the pillows of the curtained bed, and that other white, slender figure which had come slowly towards him in the dim light, bringing with it that faint, sweet fragrance of heliotrope which was so strange on that winter night.

As this last remembrance came to him, the thrill of delighted admiration, which had stirred his pulses at sight of Mabel Stanley, quickened them again; even the few cold words that she had uttered were so fresh in his memory that it seemed almost as if they had been spoken at that minute.

Then came the surprise he felt at finding Mrs. Hamilton by no means, at least apparently, in the dying condition he had anticipated. At her maid's hasty summons that there was not a minute to wait, he had hurried to her room, thinking to find her with barely enough strength to sign the will he had brought; but she had been able to speak to him calmly, in a low husky, voice, which did not appear so feeble, and what little of her face he had seen had not given him the impression that she was a woman so near death as the doctors had asserted hours previously.

It was true that the light had been so bad, and he so agitated, that he had not seen her clearly, and the shadow of the laces about her head and throat, and that of the chints bed curtains, had yet further hindered his view; but she had not seemed to him to be dying. Perhaps she might recover now, and Geoffrey Hamilton might win her to a kinder feeling for him.

And then he had read the will, which seemed to him even now, dazzled as he was by Bell's beauty, to be an unjust one. Not that the girl was to blame for it. Oh, no; she had no share in the injustice, he was sure. She had regretted it bitterly, else what was the meaning of that sharp cry of denial, that long and deathlike swoon?

Alick Holt's heart began to throb quickly once more as he recalled that swoon, as he seemed to hold her again in his strong arms, and feel the little, dark, heavy head upon his shoulder.

"Her cheek rested just there," the young man thought tenderly, glancing down at his rough tweed travelling coat. "I could feel her heart throb faintly against my own. I could have held her there for ever, I think," he added, with a slight tremulous laugh.

By-and-bye the restless pacing to and fro ceased, and he threw himself, dressed as he was, upon the bed and once there his extreme fatigue and want of rest asserted themselves more strongly than he could resist; he began to feel drowsy and his eyes grew heavy, and in less than a quarter of an hour sleep had obtained the mastery.

The winter's dawn was breaking, and the cold pale light of the new day was peeping in through the window-panes when he awoke and looked around him vaguely, not, for a moment or two, comprehending where he was; then he raised himself upon his elbow and looked around the room.

Someone had entered his room during the night, for there was a warm travelling rug over him as he lay upon the bed, but, notwithstanding this covering, he felt chilled to the bone, as he rose and slowly walked across the room to the window.

The morn had dawned clearly, and not sufficient snow had fallen to make a white world. But it was very cold and two children in the road were sliding down the frozen pathway. As he stood looking at them absently, scarcely fully conscious yet, there came a knock at his door, and in answer to his permission Hardy entered.

"I was waiting to hear you move, sir," he said quietly. "I am afraid you have not been very comfortable, Mr. Holt; but you were so sound asleep when I came in last night that I though it would be a pity to disturb you. I have been waiting to hear you move this morning," he went on, as he put down the travelling bath he carried and put Alick's dressing-case ready for him on the table. "I will get you some coffee now, sir; it's about the only thing, except omelettes and *soupe maigre* and, of course, a *pot-au-feu*, that one can get good in this place."

The man spoke cheerfully enough, but in a low tone, glancing furtively now and again at the young lawyer, who looked pale and haggard and dishevelled in the cold morning light, but whose eyes had brightened perceptibly at first sight of the bath.

"How is Mrs. Hamilton?" he asked, turning from the window. "She did not seem so ill as I feared to find her."

"Did she not, sir?" Hardy said, looking at him in surprise. "Yet I am sorry to be obliged to tell you, Mr. Holt, my mistress died half-an-hour after you left her last night."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Bric-a-Brac.

A SAILING TRICYCLE.—A tricycle with sails is a novelty that has been imported from Italy. If it is patronized the list of wrecks will be considerably lengthened, though there is less danger than might at first thought, be suspected. The sails of the Italian craft, by a well-contrived bit of mechanism, suddenly collapse and leave the wind in the lurch.

FAIRIES.—People account in strange ways for the origin of fairies. A legend, firmly held in Iceland, says that once upon a time Eve was washing a number of her children at a spring, and when the Lord appeared suddenly before her, she hustled and hid away those who were not already clean and presentable; and they being for ever invisible after, became the ancestors of the "little folk," who pervade the hills and caves and ruins to this day.

STRUCK BY LIGHTNING.—If a man is struck by lightning in China it is assumed that he has been guilty of filial ingratitude, and his remains are accordingly treated with disrespect. The belief has just been utilised in a very satisfactory manner by a Mongolian whose son left home without leaving any address. "Unless you return at once," the father advertised, "I will kill myself, in which case you would be in danger of being struck down by lightning." The lad went home.

APOSTLE SPOONS.—Apostle spoons are very seldom found before 1500, but they were very popular for a century and a half after. It was the custom for sponsors to present them to their godchildren, a wealthy person giving a complete set; others, one or two; and the poor a single spoon. It may interest our readers to give a list of the emblems to be found on Apostle spoons, as a means of identifying the apostles represented: St. James the Less, a fuller's bat, St. Peter, a key; St. James the Greater, a pilgrim's staff and gourd, bottle, or scrip, sometimes a hat with escallop shell; St. Paul, one or two swords; St. Thomas, a spear, sometimes a builder's rule; St. Matthias, an axe or halberd; St. Andrew, a saltire cross; St. Simon Zelotes, a long saw; St. Matthew, a wallet, sometimes an axe and spear; St. John, a cup—the cup of sorrow.

PREACHING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.—A curious case of the pursuit of preaching under difficulties recently came under my notice, says a correspondent. In a country church in one of the remote districts of the West of England a swarm of bees had taken up their quarters in the oaken woodwork at the back of the pulpit, to the dismay and discomfort of the weekly occupant of that structure. During the discharge of his peculiar function he was not only annoyed with the busy sullen roar of the hive, but his fear of arousing their animosity by the loud challenge of his tones, or by the vibration of the pulpit, was stimulated by the light skirmishers which used to come out and perform all sorts of minatory manœvres within measurable distance of his nose. The annoyance at length became intolerable, and orders were given to smoke out the bees. This was effectually done; but, unfortunately, the clerk in smoking out the bees set fire to the church, and it was burned to the ground.

AFTER A BRIDE.—Among certain tribes of Lolos of Western China, it is customary for the bride on her wedding morning, to perch herself on the highest branch of a large tree, while the elder female members of her family cluster on the lower limbs, armed with sticks. When all are duly stationed, the bridegroom clambers up the tree, assailed on all sides by blows, pushes, and pinches from the dowagers; and it is not until he has broken through their fence and captured the bride that he is allowed to carry her off. Similar difficulties assail the bridegroom among the Mongolian Koraks, who are in the habit of celebrating their marriages in large tents, divided into numerous separate but communicating apartments. At a given signal, the bride starts off through the compartments, followed by her wooer, while the women of the encampment throw every possible impediment in his way, "tripping up his unwary feet, holding down the curtains to prevent his passage, and applying willow and alder switches unmercifully as he stoops to raise them." As with the virgin on the tree top, the Korak maiden is invariably captured.

THE EARLY SWALLOWS.

BY E. W.

"Oh, let us away o'er the ocean once more!"
Said some swallows when first they arrived on this shore;
"How bitterly cold when compared with the south,
And no sign of food, e'en for one little mouth."

"Have patience," cried one; "though, I grant, things look ill,
There is surely enough to be thankful for still:
The sun, see, is trying his hardest to shine,
And the lark overhead has a voice quite divine.

"Let some go and search, while the others rest here,
For food and a glimpse of the nests of last year:
This well can be done by a party of three,
And let us draw lots as to which it shall be."

No better advice could the swallows desire;
so, seating themselves on a telegraph wire,
They each gave a feather, and one held them loose
In a dear little bunch for the others to choose.

Then they who the three longest feathers had drawn,
'Mid showers of good wishes, were speedily gone;
While those left behind did their best to look bold,
And nestled together to keep out the cold.

An hour slowly passed—and then, swift through the air,
Came a wonderful story of nests and good fare;
So each little bird gave a chirp of delight,
And, spreading their wings, all were soon out of sight.

From Out the Storm.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DICK'S SWEETHEART," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MRS. SCARLETT'S words—"I shall always feel the keenest interest in you and your honor"—rang in Wriothesley's ears as he left her house.

His honor! He breathed more freely as he got out of that heated atmosphere with the enervating perfume of many flowers; but he carried away with him, as she meant he should, a deadly fear at his heart.

All through her insinuations had tended towards one point, and that was a terrible one.

Their honor had always been a precious thing in the sight of his house, and now even to have it breathed upon seemed an accursed thing.

And it was all his own fault. He acknowledged that, as he strolled idly along the pavement, his head bent downwards.

He had most cruelly neglected her—that child was his wife—and flung her, as it were, defenceless, innocent, ignorant, into the jaws of a merciless world.

What wonder if, finding herself lonely and deserted, she had turned to the first kind word offered her, and, like a flower, had opened and expanded beneath the warmth and sunshine of a passionate love?

Yet had he been so altogether to blame? It was she who of her own free will had abandoned him.

He alone knew the wildness, the strength of the temptation that then had assailed him to return with her to England and see, if only once again, the woman he loved with such an absorbing devotion.

He had conquered that desire, had wandered far afield into places unknown of men, untraveled, quick with danger, to try to kill a passion that he felt was a base wrong to the woman he had married.

Still he knew he was in fault—he did not try to shirk that—only there were surely extenuating circumstances!

The question now was, what was to be done? He could only hope the mischief was not already so deeply rooted that it could not be eradicated.

That Savage was in love with his wife he could not doubt after the scene of the previous night; but what of her? Unconsciously he began to walk faster, and a fear that was akin to despair fell on him.

He would not believe it yet. That woman might have spoken falsely.

A word exaggerated had often created material for a lifelong quarrel; and with what a viperish bitterness she had spoken of Marvel.

He would speak to Cicely; she had evidently great influence over Marvel, and, if she had a deuce of a temper, still her head and her heart were sound. As for the visit to Verulam, he would prevent that at all hazards.

This new Marvel was of course strange to him; but the old Marvel had ever been so willing to obey, to comply with any request of those older than herself, that he felt the habit could not have entirely worn off, and she would give in to him when he showed her how he objected to her acceptance of Lady Lucy's invitation.

Those older than herself! It suddenly returned to him that she was but eighteen and he was twenty-nine—a terrible disparity.

She was a child still—he a man, worn and tired of the buffetings of fortune. Eleven years stood between them as an insuperable barrier.

He smiled grimly to himself as he remembered that it was a little too late to lament over that; then the smile faded. Good heavens, what a mass he had made of his life.

He had sowed, he had reaped, and the sowing and the reaping were alike bitter.

And now, to crown all, he felt that he had destroyed that poor child's life as well as his own, had dragged her down into the dull monotony that alone was left to him.

If her auntie could but have foreseen. And to him she had left her child to guard, to cherish.

Well, he would save her from herself at least, if that might be. He would positively forbid this visit to Lady Lucy—but not this evening. She was tired, her head ached. He would put off any unpleasant topic until the morning.

He had reached his own house by this, and crept very quietly up the staircase, lest she might have fallen asleep in one of the rooms and his footsteps should rouse her.

He was going with special carefulness past the cosy small drawing-room that she seemed to affect, when the sound of gay laughter and the tinkling of silver against dainty china caught his ear.

He pulled up as if taken by surprise, and; turning the handle of the door, entered the room.

Twilight was here too, but it was of a more orthodox sort than lit Mrs. Scarlett's apartment; it came straight from the sky. Here too a glorious fire shone brilliantly, and the perfume of flowers was not absent.

The laughter and the tinkling arose from the lips and the spoons of a number of people who were scattered about the room, and who were all apparently enjoying themselves immensely without let or hindrance.

Marvel was the centre of a little group that surrounded the tea-tray. She was dressed in an exquisite tea-gown of old-gold satin half smothered in lace.

Lord Castlerock was eating unlimited lumps of sugar out of her delicate little silver bowl, and Savage was leaning over her chair telling her of something absurdly comic that had occurred at the previous night's rout.

Three or four lamps had been lit in the background; but they conduced more to the softening of the scene than to the actual giving of light. The whole made an exquisite picture.

Mrs. Verulam was the first to see him, and she rustled towards him in her last wonderful new gown, which combined all the blues in creation harmoniously blended together, and addressed him with quite a gracious air.

Since she had last seen him she had come to the conclusion that harsh words seldom win, and that to catch him with guile would be the easier plan.

"Come and speak to Lady Lucy—she is so anxious to see you. It appears her mother will never forgive you for not making yourself known to her last night. But, if nicely managed, Lucy will smooth all that."

Wriothesley suffered himself to be led up to Lady Lucy, who welcomed him exactly as if she had seen him on the previous day, and then gave him a sound rating into the bargain.

He got off only by promising to call on Lady Blaine the next day and proffer in person his homage and his apologies.

"A godmother is at least somebody!" said Lady Lucy, still a little indignant. "And to slight mamma, who has always adored you, though why——"

"My godmother is more than that," said Wriothesley, wisely breaking into what promised to be very unsatisfactory speech—"she is the most charming of her sex. No, I shall not make a single exception!"

"Well, mind you come to-morrow. We have had quite a time with her to-day, after Markham had most injudiciously told her of your being actually seen last night by reliable witnesses."

"I shall certainly not forget."

He made his escape then and went across the room deliberately to where Marvel was standing, looking at the first proof of a poem that was not written by Mrs. Geraint.

"It is charming. What a gift!" she was saying to a clever-looking man standing beside her. "I hear Cregan and Peters think so well of it. Will you tell Mr. Morland that I am indebted to him for ever for having given me this early glimpse of it? May I keep it, do you think, until to-morrow? I should so like to read it when I am alone and can more fully appreciate it."

"Oh, certainly! And the fact is, Lady Wriothesley, I am sent to you as an envoy from Morland to ask if you will permit him to dedicate this volume to you. Do not refuse him, I beseech you; his very heart is set on it."

"Refuse him? No," replied she very sweetly. "Tell him from me I shall be not only pleased, but proud. Recognition from such talent as his is indeed an honor."

Her companion bowed.

"If you will permit me, I will take my leave at once," he said. "Such news as I have to convey to Morland should not, I think, be delayed a moment."

She gave him her hand, and he withdrew. As he did so, Wriothesley, who had heard all, took his place.

"You seem to sway the world in which you move," said he, with a smile that was rather forced. "Poets and princes alike offer you homage. I have almost forgotten the old Marvel."

"You have had time," said she calmly.

"True," said he, changing color. "I hope too I shall have time granted me to learn the new one."

"That is in your own power. By what you say, however, I suppose you do not mean to go abroad again immediately?"

"Not at all, possibly. Conscience, though tardy, has hinted to me at last that where one has large estates one has many poor; and that it is my duty to look after them, so I have come home for good."

A little bitter smile flitted across her face.

"I am glad you remembered your poor," she said. "But perhaps they are not as forsaken as you imagine. I have made inquiries about them—I have done what I could."

"You!"

He looked at her in surprise.

"Don't let that so astonish you," she said coldly. "One must do something, or else die or go mad. And you forget, or perhaps you do not know, that I was auntie's almoner for several years, young as I was—her accountant too—her helper in many ways. Alas, those happy days!"

She sighed heavily and clasped her hands before her. After a little while she raised her head and for the first time looked full at him.

"You have sought me," she said—"you have something to say to me?"

"You have guessed rightly. I have been told that you are going to Verulam this month?"

"When Mrs. Scarlett told you that, she told you the truth."

He flushed again, though his conscience was surely guiltless; but she, seeing the flush, did not believe it.

"I want you to cancel your engagement to Lady Lucy," he said, trying to speak lightly, naturally, but failing because of the steady gaze of Marvel's two large lovely eyes. "I do not want you to go to Verulam?"

"No? And why?"

"For many reasons. But one of them will suffice. I am not going to Verulam; and we have been too long separated as it is. It will be better for your sake that we no longer give the world food for talk. For the future let us try, at least publicly, to be on friendly terms. The lightest whisper hurts a woman's reputation."

"Ah, you have thought of that!" she said, with a pale smile.

He saw it, and it angered him.

"You compel me to think of it now," he said somewhat hastily.

"Is there a meaning in what you say? Why should not all this have been considered a year ago—eighteen months ago?"

"I know you have every right to upbraid me on that score. But an evil, however long in practice, may be stopped. I would stop this, with your assistance"—courteously. "Will you give up this visit, and spend the winter with me instead?"

"And where? Have you arranged that too?"

"At the Towers, I suppose."

"The Towers? Oh, no—never, never!"

She shrank from him as though he had dealt her a blow.

"Ringwood then—or Cranston? I don't think you have ever seen Cranston."

"No."

She answered him indifferently, and as though she would have said, "I do not care if I never do."

He waited for her to speak again; but she said nothing, standing there before him, tall and slender, with her eyes fixed upon the pot of narcissuses near her, and the light from the distant lamps falling across the golden shimmer of her gown.

She stood quite motionless. The laces on her bosom rose and fell quickly; but she showed no other sign of emotion.

"Well," he said at last, with a touch of impatience—"you will give me an answer?"

"You ask me to give up this month at Verulam, which I should enjoy, to go with you—you"—she paused as though to conquer some rising words—"to the dulness of isolation? Is that it?"

"It need not be isolation" — coldly. "You can ask as many friends as you wish."

"Your friends?"

"No—yours, of course."

"If I did, I should ask precisely those whom I shall meet at Verulam. Therefore why not go to Verulam?"

"I have told you; I shall certainly not be there."

"I am sure Lady Lucy will be charmed to give you an invitation," said she carelessly.

She threw up her head and sighed a little, as if weary of the subject.

"That is not the question. I do not desire to go; and I strongly object to your going. You do not understand me."

"I do—entirely. You wish, now it has pleased you to come home after nearly two years, to play the tyrant and deprive me of a pleasure to which I have been looking forward."

It really did seem to her at that moment that she had been thus anticipating it with a longing heart. Yet how heartily at one time she had prayed against it.

"There you wrong me," said he quickly. "I would not thwart—I would be of use to you. Believe me or not, as you will. That however is a matter that can be discussed later on. You will make up you mind to do what I think is very wise in this matter?"

"I know so little of you. Your wisdom is so hidden from me that I may perhaps deem it folly. And, at all events, I shall not break my word to Lady Lucy."

She had grown very pale, and so had he. He looked at her.

"Am I to understand that you refuse to accede to my request?"

"You are surely to understand that I have given my word; and I shall keep it."

"In spite of all I have said—that I believe it necessary that you should accompany me?"

"Your reasons?" she asked, with a little frown. "You speak many words, but you give no solid reason. Why should I give in to you?"

There was a sudden flash in her eyes which should have warned him that her patience was well-nigh spent.

"Because I am your husband," said he, with some heat. "You have not forgotten that fact, I suppose, and that as such I have some small right to control your actions."

"I deny it!" cried she, losing the calmness she had cultivated so long, and now breaking out into a passion of girlish indignation. "You who neglected me and abandoned me to the comments of the world, whose cruelty you yourself profess so well to know—what right have you to come now and take possession of me, my friendships, my very movements, and control and order them as though I were a very puppet? Oh, no, Lord Wriothesley! That would be impossible."

She made a little eloquent gesture, as though to emphasize her words. Wriothesley stood gazing at her, silenced, amazed by this vehemence, for which he had not been prepared.

The sense of neglect, of trust betrayed, that had burned itself into the girl's heart here found some small outlet, and she seized eagerly upon it.

It was so little to say, so little out of all the bitterness, the misery that she had felt!

And yet it eased in a measure her aching heart, which longed so piteously for even some poor return of the love it felt.

But with her love there was mingled so honest pride that eased her heart with bands of steel and forbade her to give to any man a gift so priceless, to be despised, perchance rejected.

"You have decided then," said he sternly—"you will go to Verulam?"

"Certainly," she said, with cold distinctness.

"There is but one thing more then that I can do," replied he.

He cast at her a glance full of displeasure, and crossed the room to where Lady Lucy was sitting.

"So you are going to carry off Lady Wriothesley?" he said, dropping into a chair beside her.

His smile was rather a forced one, though his tone was easy.

"Yes; that stroke of good fortune has fallen to me. You must not interfere with that arrangement, Duke," she said hastily, catching sight of his face. "It is a promise of long standing; and I am bent on taking her to Verulam."

"Oh, I shall not interfere! Be happy about that," he said, with ill-suppressed bitterness. "But have you considered what is to be done with me?"

"I shall take you too, of course!" she answered, laughing. "Is that it? How absurd you are, pretending to beg for invitations! As if you did not know you would be welcome as the flowers in May! Mamma will be of my party, and will be in the seventh heaven when she knows that you are coming. My father is down there already."

"The Marquis? I am glad he is able to move about."

"In his Bath chair only. But he quite misses the children now; so that he often comes to us, as they cannot altogether live with their grannies. He is much stronger, and, fortunately, his mind is as clear as ever."

After that, they had some more desultory talk about the old people and the family generally.

Marvel, who had seated herself somewhere near, had heard all, and was surprised at his sudden determination to go to Verulam. It did not displease her; it seemed indeed the one sensible thing to do.

Why he had not decided on it sooner was what puzzled her. He had said there were reasons why she should not go to Verulam; but he had in a way declined to give them—and indeed what reason could there be?

Suddenly she remembered the old foolish story about Nigel Savage. Could he have heard that? Could Mrs. Scarlett have made mischief out of it?

She blushed vividly as the thought occurred to her; but in a moment she had decided that it was but foolishness. From first to last it had been only an idle tale without an atom of foundation; and now she could see that people had forgotten all about it.

She looked over to where Savage was sitting listening to pretty Mrs. Dameron's lispings as though his heart was set upon them, and she smiled to herself.

Yes, it was only a mischievous bit of gossip when all was said, expelled by the mind almost as quickly as it entered it.

He did indeed at the moment seem attracted by Mrs. Dameron, who was very well content to have him by her.

She had not an ounce of brains; but she could talk prettily a certain jabber of her own that kept men—even clever ones sometimes—by her side.

She was so far original that her little ways, as they were called, were all her own, and by her admirers were voted charming.

Yet, if she could have seen into Savage's breast as he sat beside her, to all open seeming hanging on her words, the weariness, the eager longing to be elsewhere that reigned there would have been a fatal blow to her vanity.

After a while Lady Lucy rose to say good-bye; and presently they all rustled away, leaving only Wriothesley.

"You will dine with us?" asked Mrs. Verulam, seeing that Marvel remained silent.

"I think not," said he, after a quick glance at his wife.

"Your club?"

"Yes."

"A mere excuse," thought Mrs. Verulam. "He has evidently made an appointment to dine with her. Oh for the days of the Medicis!"

Wriothesley was now looking straight at Marvel.

"I am glad your headache is so much better," said he, with a little touch of sarcasm.

He had not forgotten how she had been laughing when he entered the room an hour before, and now she had not so much as smiled ever since.

"It is gone!" said Marvel.

She turned to him and smiled now at all events. She was a little repentant for the part she had acted during their late conversation, and wished in some wise to prove to him that, though they could never be the good old friends they once had been, still they might be on kindly terms for all that.

"I think the fact of their all dropping in like that took it away."

This was a rather unfortunate speech, but he was so astonished by that unexpected smile that he forgot to take any notice of it then.

"Whatever the cause of its removal, I am glad it is gone," he said.

"If you have nothing better to do," said she, still anxious to establish an amicable footing between them, "I think you had better change your mind and dine here."

Mrs. Verulam looked up in some trepidation. How would she take his refusal? To her astonishment however, no refusal came.

"Thank you—yes, if you will allow me," he said simply, and stayed.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE following week they all went down to Verulam. They met Kitts at the station, bound on the same journey, and found him a valuable acquisition, as there was always a strain in their relations, no matter how hard Marvel fought to be specially civil, if studiously cold, and conversation as a rule was of the languishing order.

Mr. Kitts, on the contrary, was troubled by no strain, and, as he dearly loved his own voice, chatted ceaselessly by rail and road, and even up the stone steps leading to the hall door of Verulam, where a servant, seizing upon him, bore him away from the others, and so put a stop to the animated and scientific discussion on fireworks which he had only just begun with Mrs. Verulam.

Hard and cold weather followed on their arrival—deadly, biting wintry weather. The sportsmen of the party had an excellent time of it for the first four days; but on the fifth they came downstairs to find a white world outside the windows, and the snow descending with a soft vigor that threatened to imprison them should it continue.

The children—Lulu Verulam and her cousins, Lady Lucy's younger boys—were enchanted, and rushed about from room to room to see how high upon each window-sill the lovely snow was mounting.

They were enraptured by the hint thrown out by Mr. Kitts that soon the windows would all be blocked up and the lamps lit in the morning; they were not even cast down by further hints to the effect that the doors would also be barricaded, and that, as the slender stock of provisions then in the house could not hold out long, the poor besieged would be driven to devour each other.

"The children, being the tenderest, would go first," said Mr. Kitts quite cheerfully.

"And grandpapa last," said the youngest Verulam boy, looking at the old Marquis in his skull-cap, who certainly did suggest the idea of being a tough morsel.

Lady Lucy, who had a Christmas-tree on hand for the poor of the parish, was not sorry for a day that kept all indoors, and towards the afternoon marshalled the entire force of guests into the library, an immense room where two enormous fires roared, and set them to the dressing of dolls and such like innocent amusements.

There was to be no time lost over the putting on of tea-gowns, she told them sternly; they were to work on steadily until the first dressing-bell rang; and, if they got time even to drink one cup of tea each, they were to be duly grateful.

It was a terrible dark afternoon, and all the lamps had to be lit at an abnormally early hour.

A large conservatory heated by pipes opened off the library, and this too was lit by colored lamps that shone brilliantly in the distance.

The blinds had not been pulled down, the day was still so ridiculously young; and the effect of the silent swiftly-falling snow gave the guests a little pleasurable delight in the cosy warmth of the life within doors.

All sorts of glistening scraps of satins, silks, and laces lay strewn about; here was the glitter of tinsel, there the gleam of many-colored beads.

The sparkling of the jewels on the white fingers as they drew the deft needles through the gaudy stuffs, the tints of the exquisite dresses as the lamps shone on them, and, beyond and above all, the pretty faces bright with an honest zeal to turn out such handiwork as should delight the innocent soul of the little rustic, all made a charming picture.

Mrs. Dameron indeed had developed a perfect talent for the dressing of dolls. Beneath her touch they grew from mere bags of sawdust into perfect visions of beauty.

She was to be congratulated, said her husband, as he bent over the last fairy princess she had produced; it was the first symptom of cleverness she had ever shown.

After her came Marvel, who really did wonders with her dolls; and after Marvel came Mr. Kitts.

He was found out presently, principally on account of the silence that had marked him for its own during the past ten minutes.

Old Lady Blaine, who walked up and down amongst the workers at the fashionable Dorcas meeting, was the first to discover him.

He was sitting in a deserted corner, with a big basket of dolls before him ready to be dressed, Lulu, and her cousin Horace. The children were evidently delighted with the work on which he was engaged, and sat like mice at his feet, so absorbed that they did not notice the approach of the old Marchioness.

Lady Blaine drew near, looked over the unconscious Kitt's shoulder, and instantly grew severe.

Indeed the sight that met her gaze was quite sufficient to freeze with horror the mind of any well-regulated woman. Beside this wicked young man, this betrayer of woman's secrets, was a bundle of cotton-wool, out of which innocent material he was fashioning bustles and attaching them to the dolls.

"Samuel," said Lady Blaine, with a sternness that made him jump—Mr. Kitts was the proud possessor of this euphonious name. "Really, Samuel, I do think you might find something better to do."

"I might," acknowledged Mr. Kitts, who was closely related to her, with profound melancholy—or—with a sudden accession of cheerfulness—"worse."

"Lulu, come here," said Lady Blaine, drawing the child away from such pernicious teaching.

Miss Verulam followed her but very slowly.

"But what's the harm, granny?"

She always called the old lady by the endearing title, though indeed she was nothing to her. "Don't you wear one yourself?"

"My dear, that is not the question."

"But don't you, though?" persisted Lulu, who had quite a talent for running her prey to earth.

"You speak too much, Lulu," said Lady Blaine correctively, with a view to self-defence. "Have you never heard that little girls should be——"

"I know that," said Miss Verulam contemptuously. "I can say it myself—'Little girls should be seen, and not heard.' But Mr. Kitts says that is all wrong. He has a copy-book in which it goes quite different. It is, 'Little girls should be heard, and not seen.' I like that better. We shouldn't ever have to be dressed then, should we?"

"Oh, Samuel," said Lady Blaine to the stricken Kitts, who was bending over his bustles, and shaking with something that resembled palsy.

Then she returned to Lulu.

"Never to be dressed!" she said mournfully.

She pointed to a row of ghastly dolls—naked, hideous—that lay on a table near her.

"Would you be like that?" she asked kindly.

"I couldn't be like that!" said Lulu, with much indignation; and then her eyes went still farther afield, and fell with a growing wonderment on all the dainty ladies applying themselves to their work as though their lives depended upon the accomplishment of it.

A sudden thought seemed to strike her. "Granny," said she, turning to Lady Blaine with a perplexed air, "why do they do it? Why do they work like that, dressing these dolls? Couldn't they buy them dressed, as I do?"

"Certainly, my dear. But these friends of ours think they would like to do something for the poor besides buying them things. They want to work for them. You know there is a far greater sweetness in being actively kind than passively so."

"I shouldn't like Mrs. Geraint to be kind to me," said Miss Verulam promptly, pointing the finger of scorn at the doll which that soulful woman had just ruined.

"Hush, my dear," said Lady Blaine rather in a hurry. "But, do you know, Lulu, ugly as you think that doll, there are many hundreds of little girls who would think it beautiful because they have never had one at all."

"Well, you have all done so wonderfully well, been so strictly industrious, that I think you deserve a cup of tea," said Lady Lucy presently.

The men had brought in the tea a few minutes before, with the tiny steaming cakes on their brass tripods, and the little American dough-nuts after which the soul of Mr. Kitts hankered ceaselessly.

A short spell of idleness followed; down went the needles, off went the thimbles; each fair worker threw up her head and sighed profoundly, as though worn out by labor severe and prolonged.

Mrs. Scarlett put aside her work for good and all, and carried off her tea and Lord Wriothesley to the distant end of the conservatory, and there kept them.

All the world had seen him go; no one knew why he went—it was willingly, at all events, and for the matter of that, it was easy to guess the attraction too.

Not one there but remembered his old infatuation for her; and so they all kept the conversational ball rolling with a kindly desire to prove to his wife they saw nothing of what was going on in the conservatory.

It was impossible however not to see. Mrs. Scarlett was talking in a very impressive manner, and Wriothesley was listening with evident interest.

Mrs. Verulam's heart grew hot within her with wrath suppressed, and Nigel Savage, with a quick indrawing of his breath, looked at Marvel.

He had honestly tried to keep away from her all this past week; he had seen her avoidance of him—an avoidance which distressed her, and which she tried to atone for by kind and friendly glances thrown to him now and then; but it had hurt him nevertheless, and he had rather helped her to a continuance of it than sought to overcome it.

But now, as he saw her sitting somewhat apart from the others, with drooping head and a sad melancholy in all her bearing, he could no longer succumb to his pride, but broke its bonds with one effort, and went straight to her.

"What have I done to you," he began—"how have I offended you—that you will not look at me or speak to me?"

"Has it seemed to you like that? I did not mean it so," replied she, with gentle sorrow; "but that old foolish story returns to me always, and I fear that——"

"Shall I go away?" said he. "Would that make you happier? Out of the country, I mean?"

"Oh, no, do not!" said she, with such evident earnestness that his heart began to beat faster.

She looked at him with open entreaty in her large eyes.

"I have so few friends," she said a moment later, with a forlorn little smile.

"You have one at least who would do much for you," he said.

He had it on his lips to say "who would die for you;" but he was afraid to risk that sweet old assurance.

"I know it," she said softly. "I rely upon you so much that I know you will not be angry with me because I seem to shun you; but Cicely told me that I could not be too cautious, and that I was not to talk exclusively to you. Not that I ever did that, I think"—looking at him anxiously.

"Mrs. Verulam is a woman of unbounded wisdom," said Savage a little bitterly. "I suppose we must abide by her decision; but, after all, is there such great need? Do you think Lord Wriothesley would object to your treating me as, say, an ordinary acquaintance? To please him and satisfy his mind, is it absolutely necessary that I should be denied a word, a glance now and again—that I should be put aside as something actually unworthy?"

"You are offended with me," said Marvel, in a low tone.

She toyed nervously with the spoon in her saucer, and he could see that her hand was trembling; yet, because of a sort of anger against her in his heart, he would not come to her rescue.

"I think I am the most unhappy person alive," she said at last, raising her eyes to his—they were full of tears. "My life is a ruined life. Hope I have none. Such things as should be mine I have lost through no fault, I think, of my own; and now I shall lose you too."

"Never!" said Savage, with a little outburst of feeling; he could not subdue that, but he did subdue what might have followed on it. "What I mean is only this—you give me a chance, you see, to speak when you say your life is ruined—that, if your life is lonely, why should you increase the desolation of it, why cast from you those who might help to brighten it? It—if he who should be the one to fill your existence leaves it empty, I think that you——"

"I cannot be angry with you," interrupted she gently; "but if you would only not speak about it. You blame him, but, if you think of all—everything—you will see that there is much to be said on his side of the question. When I remember"—she paused, and then broke out miserably—"and that is always—always, I think—I feel as though I could forgive him all."

"Even that?" asked Savage quickly, with a meaning glance at the open conservatory where sat Wriothesley and Mrs. Scarlett.

When he had said it, he would have given the world to recall it; but it was too late then.

A sudden flood of crimson rushed to her face, lingered there a moment, then receded, leaving her white as the snow falling so steadily outside.

She cast one wounded look at him—no more—but it drove him frantic.

"Do not take it like that, I beseech you," he said, turning his back completely on the room, and standing so as to shield her from observation. "I would far rather die than hurt you, Lady Wriothesley. I entreat, I implore you to forgive that brutal question!"

"You speak of death very lightly," said she—"you, who do not mean what you say; but I"—her lips were trembling, and there was not a vestige of color in her face—"I do mean it, and I wish to Heaven now that I were dead and cold within my grave."

She grew so pale that he thought she was going to faint.

He thought of the gossipings, the whisperings, the insulting pity that would follow on a scene of any kind, and he stooped over her on pretence of taking her cup, and pressed her hand warningly.

"Don't give way, whatever you do," he said. "Think of her—her triumph; and they will talk—these others. Do you think you could manage to come with me to the drawing-room—anywhere?"

"You are wrong," she said, forcing herself to speak and looking up. "I shall not betray myself as you fear. Bah!"—with a tremulous smile. "Will you not grant me any pride? I should not have spoken as I did—it was wrong, absurd of me; but there are moments when one loses oneself, and, though I regret it, it has been a relief to me."

"From my soul I regret it!" said he remorsefully.

"Do not," said she, with a sigh. "But, since you have driven me to speech, hear me. That which you hinted at"—with a shudder—"all should, I think, be forgiven by me, had I the magnanimity to do it. He does not care for me; and yet, but for me——"

"Not care for you!"

"Is that to be so greatly wondered at? Think of what I am—unknown, a woman without position, without"—her voice sank, and so did her eyes, poor child!—"a name! Oh"—she turned to him, a very agony of shame and regret in her expression, with her lips compressed and her fingers so tightly interlaced that the blood receded from them—"would any man care to marry such a one as I am?"

"Any man? Marvel, Marvel, are you mad to tempt me like this?" cried he, in a whisper, his eyes aflame. He bent over her.

"Tempt!" she repeated breathlessly, a sudden terror creeping into her face. She drew back, and this sensitive shrinking from him woke him to a sense of the danger he was incurring more than all else she could have said or done.

"Tempt me to anger you again by censuring him whom you so nobly defend," he said, with a heavy sigh.

He was still bending over her, his face agitated, whilst hers was white and full of melancholy, when Lord Wriothesley came out of the conservatory. His brow was clouded as he appeared on the threshold, but it grew positively black, as if with evil doubts confirmed, as his glance fell on Marvel and Savage.

The latter protected Marvel from the observation of the rest of the people in the room by standing before her; but from where Wriothesley stood she was distinctly visible, and the look he fixed on her was full of passionate anger.

"She evidently didn't agree with him," said Mr. Kitts to himself *sotto voce*, alluding not to Marvel, but to Mrs. Scarlett. He was sitting near the entrance to the conservatory, with Miss Verulam on his knee, and a humming-top in process of being wound in his hands, and had caught the first glimpse of Wriothesley's wrathful expression.

"Eh?" said Lulu, pricking up her ears.

"I was merely observing," said Mr. Kitts, "that the air of that conservatory doesn't seem to have agreed with Lord Wriothesley."

"Nonsense!" declared Miss Verulam flatly. "The air in there is as sweet as sugar. It smells of nothing but the most lovely things."

"Which only goes to prove an unpleasant but undeniable truth, that lovely things are as a rule bad for us. See how ill he looks!"

"I don't believe it—I won't," said Lulu, struggling down from off his knee. "It isn't one bit true; I'll go and ask him myself."

"Ask him what?" said Mr. Kitts softly, holding her however lightly but firmly, as an awful suspicion crossed his mind.

"If the air of that nice conservatory made him ill, and if it is true that lovely things are bad for him."

"My good child, you can't do that!" exclaimed Mr. Kitts, holding her now with a frenzied grasp. "It would mean a sudden earthquake—battle, murder, and sudden death would follow on it. Lulu, be advised—be warned——"

"I won't—don't care!" cried Miss Verulam valiantly, kicking hard now to regain dear liberty; she scented battle in the breeze, and rose to the occasion. She felt herself forcibly detained, and that set her blood boiling. "Let me go—let me go!" said she indignantly; and then, with the fatal instinct of childhood that told her where her strength lay—"if you don't, I'll scream it out loud to him!"

"But not if I give you a knife—a grand large knife, with a corkscrew and four blades—sharp—that will cut you—cut your friends—cut anything, everything! Think of that knife!"

Mr. Kitts poured out all this volubly, in the very desperation of fear.

"Eh?" said Miss Verulam, visibly relenting; she had ceased to struggle, and was regarding him with a judicial eye.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A FAST HORSE.—An Englishman, boasting of the superiority of the horses in his country, mentioned that the celebrated Eclipse had run a mile in a minute. "My good fellow," exclaimed an American present, "that is rather less than the average rate of our common roadsters. I live at my country seat near Philadelphia, and when I ride in a hurry to town of a morning, my own shadow cannot keep up with me, but generally comes into the warehouse to find me from a minute to a minute and a half after my arrival. One morning the animal was restless, and I rode him as hard as I possibly could seven times around a large factory just to take the old Harry out of him. Well, sir, he went so fast the whole time I saw my own back right in front of me, and was twice in danger of riding over myself!"

COMPANIONSHIP.

BY RITA.

After some thought that leaped life's boundary
Unto that icy night that broods afar,
Beyond the gleam of the remotest star,
The night from whence we came and whither flee,
A gulf of darkness and vacuity;
Ultimate dread and doom of all that are,
With which the throbbing pulses are at war,
As a scared child affrighted by the sea;

With what a shuddering speed we seek again
The living contact of our own home-fire,
Whose ruddy comfort flickers higher and higher,
Round which the dear familiar faces stand,
Clasping the warmth of reassuring hand,
Happy to be aware of even pain!

"The Milky Way."

BY S. E. W.

CHAPTER I.

SYBIL was to dine late. She had never dined late in her life before. That is not to say that Miss Sybil Latimer had never been present during a part or even the whole of that solemn function ushered in nightly by the roll of the gong at eight o'clock.

Sybil was an only child and had her privileges, the chief of which was to be the companion of her parents at all times and seasons when not actually engaged in the pursuit of knowledge; but with that stern upholder of etiquette, her mother, all such liberty must be acknowledged as liberty, all relaxations and indulgences recognized as relaxations and indulgences, and even sitting up to dinner must never be called dining late.

Thus up to the present time.

But Sybil was now trembling on the verge of womanhood: her eighteenth birthday, that great birthday in a girl's life, was at hand, and even Lady Georgina allowed that it was time to acknowledge as rights what had hitherto been winked at as irregularities.

The world must be apprised that the heiress was about to step across the Rubicon.

On a like occasion Lady Georgina's nieces, the blooming Mary and Isabella, who won Sybil's envy and admiration, had each been granted a ball of her own, a ball to which half the county had been invited, and at which the fair debutante had reigned as queen; but a ball for Sybil was not to be contemplated for a moment.

"For a delicate creature like her it would be madness, absolute madness," quoth Colonel Latimer, who took to the full as much charge of his daughter as though she had had no other parent. "My dear"—to his wife—"you would not, you surely would not think of it," continued he, stammering with anxiety and consternation.

For the idea had been mooted in his presence, and had made the few remaining hairs on his head stand on end with fright.

Her ladyship, however, was quite of his own mind on the subject.

A ball was the last thing she would think of; Sybil would be sure to be overheated, overstrained, overdone in every way.

A ball meant a vast amount of fatigue and risk, and a ball dress on a December evening every kind of ill to which the flesh is heir.

Then for a ball, the great rooms and all the long, echoing, draughty corridors with with Latimer Hall bristled, would have to be thrown open, and Sybil would have to thread them with the rest.

Terrible thought. Last, but not least, who in the neighborhood was there worthy of leading the heiress on to the waxed floor?

Sir Robert Dovercourt certainly, but unluckily Sir Robert was not a dancing man, and was moreover seldom to be had when wanted.

If wanted for a ball, or a picnic, or any sort of festal gathering of the proper, orthodox, family kind, the young baronet might almost be reckoned upon to have another engagement, and Lady Georgina was not the person to like being met by another engagement.

Failing Dovercourt, Godfrey Hanbury was the next in succession, and it was a long step from the one to the other.

Sybil's mother, who thought hardly anybody could ever be good enough to touch the hem of her daughter's garment, drew up her own beautiful neck at the bare idea of Godfrey, and she and her husband finally agreed together in parental conclave that a dinner party—a formal, frigid, stately dinner party, at which all the old silver and china should be in use, and for which the invitations should be issued weeks beforehand—was the only suitable, sensible, and rational mode of celebrating their darling's entrance into the world.

"Sybil," quoth the old soldier, shaking his grizzled head—he had not married early, and was now in his sixty-fifth year—"Sybil is a fragile flower; no adverse wind must ever blow upon her. Balls and theatres are for girls of another kind. Great, strong, robust young women," proceeded he, with ineffable contempt, "may be able to enjoy such amusements, and derive no injury from them. I am not speaking for others. I am not dictating to other parents; but our daughter is cast in a mould of her own. A delicate, shrinking, sensitive creature," waving his hand gently to and fro; "a mere puff of thistledown—that is our Sybil. She is a charge, a great charge. It is our duty to guard, protect, ward off every roughness, every sharpness from her tender frame. And now, now that she has reached the age when dangers of another kind are likely to assail her, we must redouble our exertions. Sybil will be sought after, run after, raced after. There will be a regular siege laid to Miss Sybil Latimer whenever she appears in public, and her lovely face——"

"Yet, would you believe it," said Lady Georgina, who had heartily agreed to all, "would you believe that my sister Diana spoke to me only yesterday about Sybil's want of color, and asked whether I did not think she would be the better for running about more in the open air? Imagine Sybil running about in the open air in mid-winter! As if I should ever be so mad as to risk my poor darling's health by such rashness! Only yesterday, you remember, we both fancied she had a cough after driving with me, yet I am sure I had the carriage windows closed the whole time. The open air, indeed! The raw, damp, cold, December open air! But that was Diana all over."

"Diana all over," echoed he. "Your sister thinks that all the family should be as tough and rough as her branch of it. Because she and her daughters are able for anything——"

"And they will certainly grow coarse, as I hinted yesterday. I was determined Diana should not have it all her own way. And as I could see plainly what was in her mind—indeed she almost said that we overdid it in our care of Sybil—I had my answer. I said, 'My dear, your girls look almost too well. There is such a thing as looking too well. What a skin gains in color it often loses in delicacy. A skin cannot be too smooth. Does it not strike you that Isabel's skin is perhaps hardly quite as smooth as it was?' That was how I answered Diana."

"And very well you answered too. Yes, I think Isabel has too much bloom. At present, while she is quite young, this may be overlooked, for she is a pretty girl as girls go, though of course not equal to Sybil; but in a few years' time I would not answer for it that either of your nieces will not have developed too fully, that they will not have grown coarse, as you say, with all that walking, and riding, and skating, and tennis-playing. Your sister thinks it healthy. I am no great admirer of such healthiness myself," owned the Colonel, frankly.

"At any rate it would never suit our child," assented Lady Georgina. "I am thankful that nobody can interfere with us about her. Diana may do as she pleases with her own daughters, but it is rather too hard that she should wish to manage ours. And imagine Sybil brought up like Mary and Isabel! If anything were to happen to Sybil——"

The door quietly opened and Sybil entered.

A fragile-looking creature, as her father had said, pale, slight, and bending, with soft dark eyes that looked wistfully out upon the world, and a thoughtful brow, almost too pensive for one so young.

Sybil was seldom heard to laugh; it would have been too much to expect that a child so nurtured could laugh with any of the abandonment of youth, but the chiselled lips of her small sensitive mouth would occasionally part in a smile, a smile so rarely sweet, so timid yet so arch, so tremulous yet so keen and apprehensive, that people whose sole acquaintanceship with the heiress had hitherto been through the representation of her parents, or beneath their strictest supervision—we had almost said intervention—told each other that nobody as yet knew anything about the real Sybil Latimer, and that, carefully hid as this being was from mortal view, she yet existed in other form than that presented to the world.

"If one could only get at her!" sighed the girl's own next of kin, the Lady Diana, and Mary, and Isabel, above alluded to. "If one could only ever see Sybil without two pairs of eyes which hover over her from hour to hour."

"If we do but propose a walk, or a ride, or a talk upstirs," cried the lively Isabel, "Aunt Georgina has a thousand objections on the tip of her tongue. It is Sybil's hour for lying down, or her hour for taking her tonic, or her hour for something else. The amount of medicine of which Sybil partakes in the course of the week would keep a poor man's family minus other food for the same length of time. And if she does but stir from the drawing-room fireside for half an hour, it is 'Where is Sybil?' from Uncle Henry, or 'Have you seen Sybil?' from Aunt Georgina, until some one has to own up as to where she was last seen and heard; and then the poor thing is hunted out and run in again, and penned down in an easy-chair, with a shawl hung over the back if there be but a breath from the doorway; and she is begged to say whether she is not cold, nor chilly, nor shivering, when she is far more likely to be faint from the heat, and suffocating for want of air."

"Her poor little white face quite haunts me sometimes," subjoined Lady Diana slowly.

"And her voice, mamma; such a little low, soft, toneless voice. I don't think Aunt Georgina would even like her to speak so that she could be heard across the table. Oh, I know she thinks we chatter too much, and too fast, and too everything, but I do wish poor Sybil might be allowed not to whisper."

"I seldom even hear her whisper."

"She is afraid of you, mamma; she is afraid of us all. I suppose," said Isabel, with a little blush, "I suppose she has found out that we do laugh about her—not exactly at her, no one could laugh at Sybil—but about her; about all the odd things they make her do, and the clothes they make her wear, and the way they treat her altogether. If only Sybil could be got away from Uncle Henry and Aunt Georgina, if only she——"

"It is of no use your making schemes for your cousin, my love," interrupted her mother, promptly. "I have tried all I could do, and said all I could say, and it came to nothing. Worse than nothing, it created a soreness on the subject. So that now my tongue is tied, and though I have set others on, to see whether they might not have more success, it has been equally in vain. Nothing will open the eyes of your uncle and aunt. They will go their own way, and all I can say is, I hope they may not live to repent it."

Such being the state of things at Latimer Hall, it will be understood why so much importance attached to the simple fact of Sybil's dining late on the occasion of her eighteenth birthday.

Everything that the only child did, or thought, or felt was of much importance.

She was made to think of herself as the principal personage of the place, its pervading spirit, and the chief end of both her parents' lives.

Every habit, or rule, or law, had reference primarily to her; and in her health, her comfort, and her convenience was found an interest which grew with every added year.

How such an exotic was ever to expand or develop mentally, how she was to thrive or flourish bodily had their sheltering arms been withdrawn, was a problem neither Colonel Latimer nor his wife cared to face.

They were to protect, support, hold between finger and thumb as it were, the gossamer-like creature given them for a child, and with their whole hearts they believed that nothing which care, affection, or unremitting watchful study could bestow upon their darling, was wanting on their part.

The conviction was a just one—it was wisdom alone that was needed.

But oh! the martyrdom which that single want inflicted on a helpless victim.

Many and many a time the pillow of the gentle girl would be wet with tears of shame, grief, or disappointment, unsuspected by all.

Many and many a time would the quiet obedience so unhesitatingly yielded send the stinging blood to her cheek.

Often and often would she hang her meek young head to hide the cloud which no endeavors could altogether keep from overshadowing her brow.

From earliest days it had been so—she felt, she fancied, it must be so for ever.

It was hers not to make reply; hers not to reason why; hers simply to suffer, trust, and love; more, to smother all outward testimony of the sobs, the distress, which would have vent when none was by to view or hearken, when the candle was out at night, and only the form of the old nurse could be seen in the far distance of the next room, still and motionless, scarce venturing to stir hand or foot, lest the sound should disturb the supposed sleeper.

Sybil would bury her face in the kindly pillow and weep freely then.

Oh, why was she so different from others? Why was her lot to be so strangely apart from that of all around her?

No one was ever like her—she was never like the rest. How happy they must be! How ineffably lonely and dull she often was.

By-and-by conscience would begin to prick, however, and the poor child would tell herself she was the naughtiest, wickedest, most ungrateful being in the whole wide world; that poor papa and mamma, against whom she was repining and fretting, loved her dearly, and only wanted her good in all they did—and the tears would flow afresh at this, the cruellest thought of all.

But they were different tears from those which had gone before.

The hot, scalding drops which had blistered Sybil's cheeks as they ran, had had their own deep fount of bitterness in a sense of wrong and injustice, and with them no softening dews of penitence had mingled; and as this secret fount was ever being fed afresh, it was little wonder that its waters would sometimes swell into a flood that well nigh overflowed.

Scarce a day passed at one period of the girl's life but what it brought its own pang.

What agonies, for instance, would a showery afternoon cost the owner of that curiously cut, carefully invented outer garment which never failed to be handed into the carriage or hung across the Colonel's arm, when Sybil was of the party.

Hapless Sybil, who must presently suffer herself to be enfolded in the loathed wrap, would almost sooner have died than have laced her cousins thus, had the choice been offered her.

Yet how often had the very thing most dreaded taken place—the meeting which brought with it such throes of shame, actually come to pass!

From pure compassion, open inquiries and mirth had come at length to be suppressed, but what signified it?

Sybil knew — well did she know — how it would be the moment her back and the backs of her parents were turned.

What booted it that, all unconscious of the curled corners of Lady Diana's mouth, "We have had such an excellent cloak made for Sybil," the proud father would say, exhibiting it and her with a satisfaction unconcealed?

Lady Diana would, it is true, only nod in answer, and he would perceive nothing; but Sybil knew that her aunt could not speak for laughing.

"Turn round, my dear," the Colonel would run on, "turn and let your aunt see the other side. Look, Diana; do you see the cut of that? No cold air can penetrate in there, can it? Nor creep up that sleeve, eh, can it? Nor chill the back of the neck? All our own idea, her mother's and mine. Made to order. Made on purpose for Sybil. Not another cloak like it in London."

Lady Diana would not answer him a word, but Sybil almost fancied a caress in the hand laid upon her own humbled, drooping little shoulders presently.

Again it would be the anxious restrictions, cautions, and reminders of her fond guardians which, well enough for a child of six, embittered the ear of the maiden of sixteen.

If Sybil were lunching out—for this dissipation in a sociable neighborhood would now and again be permitted under the loving care and surveillance of the elderly couple, every morsel would be watched and every dish inspected.

A throbbing little heart would be almost sure to be set a-going ere the meal was over by something such as this, "Sybil, my darling, you know what Dr. Rhubarb said. Anything the least rich at table was to be strictly avoided. Is not that gravy a little rich? If so, do not take it, love. Keep your vegetables to the other side of the plate."

"Sybil has to be so very particular," to host and hostess.

This from Lady Georgina.

Sybil's father would go yet further.

"Sybil has such an uncommonly delicate stomach," would be distinctly caught in the Colonel's deep bass, supposed, but only supposed, to be lowered to an undertone.

Oh, the rush of hot blood to Sybil's brow at the sound!

If only, only they would not talk about her, would not draw attention to her, would let her alone as other girls were let alone.

She would avoid gravy, vegetables, everything—she would eat dry bread, if she might but eat it unobserved and uncommented upon.

How she would envy the healthy, hearty lads and lasses around her, country-bred children whose parents and guardians never troubled their heads as to what they ate, or drank, or wore—once it were on—who might tumble about on the ice, frolic in the snow, dance the long winter nights away, and toss among the haycocks on summer afternoons.

Sybil was never allowed to run, or jump, or toss.

She was not to be made too hot, nor too cold, nor too tired—and above all, she was never to be excited. Her cousins, when children, had been wont to shout aloud at their play.

Sybil had once been heard to shout too. This had disturbed the Colonel and Lady Georgina for days afterwards.

To make one of the noisy, merry, riotous party of which Lady Diana was always the head and front, was the summit of bliss in the eyes of the solitary child. She would watch one and another of the little ones, as, fresh from their sports, they would run straight to their mother's lap, panting and glowing, spreading their mud-stained little hands upon her breast, kissing her with their hot, moist, merry lips, all unrepressed and unrebuked.

And yet, of course, of course, she could not doubt her parents' affection. It was only that Aunt Diana was different, and Aunt Diana seemed to understand.

What delightful strong boots and woolen gloves Mary and Isabel wore, and what nice, rough, fashionable-looking coats they had.

Poor Sybil's heart would be nearly broken as she compared those coats, and those plain, serviceable, unremarkable hats and frocks, with her own constructed, invented, unique articles of attire, every one of which had been designed on some strange unknown pattern for herself alone, and for whose every seam special and minute instructions had had to be given.

Even her stockings were at all times woven to order; even those simple accoutrements could be turned into instruments of torture.

It will scarcely be credited why, but the fact was this, that the poor little toes were severally encased as though in gloves.

Now this secret Sybil hoped and almost prayed was unknown beyond the precincts of her own home.

The distortion was not visible, not visible ordinarily; but the dread lest any unforeseen circumstance might lead to its detection was for many years one of the haunting terrors of the young girl's life.

Little did either parent dream to what was due many an apparent readiness to comply with their wish to refuse an invitation, since not a syllable would be breathed in mortal ear of Sybil's inability to face the risk that lurked therein—since it would only need Lady Georgina's "Be sure that Miss Sybil changes her slippers," to open gulfs of possible misery.

Once the acute little ear, ever on the stretch, had caught a terrible opening sentence.

"Sybil is a great sufferer from cold feet,"

delivered in the old Colonel's most impressive aside.

She had almost torn her playmates out of hearing. At every moment she had expected to hear the revelation, followed by all the self-complacent prolixity in which Colonel Latimer was wont to indulge when once upon his hobbyhorse, and then—Sybil could not bear to think of what might have happened then.

If once Mary, or Isabel, or the boys knew!

Now the truth was that they did know, but pity sealed their lips. Pity sealed the lips of most people, when the pale-faced little girl was by.

Who could bring the scarlet flush to that brow, and the quiver to that lip?

"The sweetest girl under heaven, Sir Robert."

It was Lady Diana who spoke.

"The sweetest, truest, most loyal, lovable nature. How my sister and her husband ——"

Here the speaker choked indignantly and remembered herself. When in the vein, Lady Diana's tongue was apt to run away with her.

"Lady Georgina is, of course, entirely devoted to her daughter," proceeded she presently, "but all the same she is cruel to her, cruel beyond everything. Oh, don't look at me like that, Sir Robert. Bless me! I thought you knew what kind of cruelty I mean. Sybil's parents worship the very ground she treads upon, but the ground must be carpeted, cushioned, padded, till she can neither see nor feel what she is doing. She is perfectly conscious herself of this—and that is what I mean by Lady Georgina's being cruel. Sybil perceives everything incongruous and absurd in the mode of her upbringing. Her parents, on the other hand, perceive nothing, and will take advice from nobody. It is sufficient for them that some real or fancied want of Sybil's is supplied. They care not in the slightest whether or no public opinion is outraged by the manner in which it is done. My niece is not strong, not naturally strong, but she is by no means so delicate as they imagine, or as they have done their best to make her. She wants sunshine, warmth, freedom, merrymaking, laughter. In her earlier days she wanted to romp, and shout, and tear about in the open air"—(the open air, in her mouth was to Sybil's parents as a red rag to a bull)—"now," proceeded the sensible and warm-hearted creature, "now that she is older, she wants to be let alone, to devise her own little projects, follow her own bent, and busy her hands and her brain in ways of her own choosing. The poor child does not want to be set to do every single thing she does. It would be amusing, if it were not so absurd, to hear a great girl of seventeen, nearly eighteen now, directed and instructed, and questioned and cross-questioned, as to how every moment of her time is to be, or has been passed. If Sybil were a fool— But she is not by any means a fool! So far from it, I am persuaded that my niece has considerable force of character, and that all this grinding down and cramping in has not been able entirely to subdue it. She submits her will, but not without difficulty. And she is a finely strung child—well, scarcely a child now, but I must always think of her as one—it is dreadful to her to have every little fancy held up to public view, and forced upon the attention of an audience. Sybil knows and sees what they are thinking, while her parents are entirely unconscious. My goodness! what scenes I have seen!" and Lady Diana turned up her eyes and raised her hands with the unction of a true orator. "Well, well," proceeded she, "well, well. Perhaps they will be wiser some day; but I must say that the whole thing is a never-ceasing fret to me, and that the patience with which that dear child bears with my poor foolish sister and her still sillier husband—Colonel Latimer is the most obstinate man in existence, Sir Robert—I say that Sybil's obedience and dutiful submission towards them often brings tears to my eyes."

"You are a very good woman," said Sir Robert, who had listened to every word of the harangue. "You—you are a good woman."

There was something in his tone which made Lady Diana look up.

"Sybil is very pretty," said she, very softly.

"Very pretty."

"And quite tall enough for so slight a figure."

"Quite tall enough."

"If she were only better dressed."

Sir Robert smiled.

"I say, if she were only better dressed, Sir Robert; but no doubt you think that is only a woman's notion."

"No, indeed, Lady Diana, I am sure that I—I agree with you, but after all, you know, a frock is easily changed."

"Sybil's frocks are not."

The speaker laughed; a laugh which had reference to some of the Colonel's whispered revelations.

"However," she added, recollecting that she had something yet to say, "however, I understand your meaning. After all, dress is nothing. You are going to the birthday party, I believe."

He believed so too.

"Well, you will take Sybil in to dinner, I have very little doubt. You know she is to dine late"—Lady Diana, like the rest, attached a world of meaning to the simple fact—"Sybil is to dine late, and I understand is to be made a sort of queen of the feast; so, although her mother will have old Lord Lurzecott, who could hardly be put off with a chit like Sybil, she will be taken in by the next in precedence, probably yourself."

He bowed and looked—she was sure he looked—pleased.

"Do try to draw her out," proceeded Sybil's aunt, earnestly. "Make her talk. Make her answer for herself, for once. It is a real opportunity; for her parents cannot well answer in her place and anticipate every syllable from the two ends of the dinner-table. They would if they could," and she laughed afresh, "but luckily the table is long; oh, but," and her face fell, "but I am afraid you will be placed at my sister's left hand. Oh, that would spoil all, for that poor old thing—Lord Furzecott, you know—he will only nod his head and mumble over his plate; he will require far, far too little attention, I fear. Well, you must do your best. Seize every chance. You will be repaid, indeed you will. Sir Robert, I love Sybil"—which was a very good-natured thing to say on the part of a woman who had daughters of her own.

But, to be sure, Lady Diana was shrewd as well as kind.

She had formed her own ideas on the subject: and she now told herself that neither Mary nor Isabella would ever need go a-begging, that young Dovercourt was nothing to them nor they to him, and that, taking one thing with another, he was the very man for her niece.

Sybil would be happy with him, and he would be the making of her; the fond parents would never refuse such an offer, and so much could not with certainty be predicted of any other likely to come in their way.

"Good character, first-rate position, and close proximity," nodded the excellent aunt to herself; "they will never have such another chance, never. It would break their hearts, poor things, to part with their ewe lamb; and to keep her near at hand they would give up a great deal, but there is really no one else at all suitable. As for Godfrey Hanbury"—and she turned up her nose as Lady Georgina had done, and looked equally handsome and haughty as she did so. "Sir Robert is poor, but his family is as good as our own; so some of the Latimer money may very well flow into the Dovercourt coffers. He is very nice—he is more, he is delightful—and so comfortably stupid that they would all get on together like a house on fire. A brilliant man, even an ordinarily clever one, would never put up with Henry, never for a moment. But poor dear Sir Robert, with his round face and simple blue eyes—I think they rather lit up as he listened to me," and she smiled to herself afresh—"I think I contrived to work an idea into his honest noddle. Now, if only those tiresome people—really, Henry and Georgina are such a pair of simpletons I am at the end of all patience with them—if only they will not go and do something ridiculous at this crisis, I think we shall achieve something. But they are such—it was with the utmost difficulty that I could prevail on them to allow Sybil to be handed in to dinner by the only man they would dream of for her husband! It was that lucky bit of suggesting that she might be made a sort of birthday queen of, that carried weight enough. Well, I have done my part, and now if only Sir Robert will do his!"

Sir Robert was ready enough to do his.

To him, as the rest of the world, this dining late of Sybil Latimer's meant the commencement of a new epoch, and as he had known her, off and on, from childhood, in a desultory, haphazard, come-and-go sort of fashion, it is not to be wondered at that he took an interest in the matter.

Had he been let to do so, he would soon have managed to be good friends with Sybil.

He had a talent for making friends, and, even as it was, she was less shy and more at her ease with him than with anybody beyond the precincts of Latimer Hall.

His frankness, his hearty laugh, and his broad, red, beaming face had an infinite allurement for one who was never red-faced (except from blushes), and who did not know what it was to laugh loud.

Sir Robert would roar with merriment when thoroughly amused.

He would lean back in his chair, and enjoy the joke to its very dregs; while poor Sybil, who could see funny things too, and would have had quite a little story of humor of her own if it had not been so persistently quelled, would look at him with an envy which, as years passed, gradually gave way to admiration.

How big, and bold, and brown he was. How little he cared which way the wind blew, or how hard the rain fell!

How free he made with his tongue and his step within the muffled, hushed domain in which she herself had been taught to glide and murmur until the very sound of a door shutting sharply or a footfall treading fearlessly would sometimes set her pulses in a flutter.

Then how readily, and pleasantly, and altogether equably would Sir Robert chat with either parent, not as though he had a moment's hesitation about responding to their inquiries or combating their arguments!

Once or twice he had actually spoken up for her; he had dared to plead for an immunity against which even Lady Diana had not ventured to protest.

He had not, it is true, been successful—no one ever would have been successful—but he had done it, and Sybil had almost adored him for doing it.

Grief and gratitude had mingled their bitter and sweet in her heart that night; grief that her friend should have known of the rule which was to her so deep an indignity, and gratitude that he should have striven to right her wrong.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MEDICINE IN RUSSIA.

THERE are comparatively few doctors in Russia—a state of affairs which is attributable to the fact that the peasants have a great dislike to them.

Consequently, in all out-of-the-way places, and among the laboring classes generally, the treatment of diseases and affections is confined to amateurs, or, to speak more correctly, to a body of individuals, usually women, whose vocation it is to treat illnesses, and who, taken collectively, possess a remarkable knowledge of the medicinal properties of herbs and drugs. They are held in great awe, and sometimes even looked upon as witches and treated as such.

It is a curious but altogether general belief that the fevers of all kinds, ague and malaria, which are the most prevalent diseases in Russia, haunt the country in the shape of invisible women, known as the "Twelve Sisters," who go about from house to house and from village to village in search of some one in whom to take up their abode.

They successively visit the patient unless expelled. The first are only troublesome; but those that come later weaken him considerably, and the Twelfth Sister takes his life.

Each Sister is said to have an objection to a certain mode of treatment, and, if it should be resorted to, will quit the patient immediately.

Thus Sister No. 1 is afraid of sharp instruments, and to get rid of her the patient's bed is surrounded with knives, axes, spades, scythes, saws, etc., laid with their sharp edges to the door.

Sister No. 2 is expelled by swallowing an alcoholic extract of twelve kinds of wood; and Sister No. 3 by swallowing a dose of gunpowder; while Sister 9 dreads cold water of all things, and the one way to expel her is to take a cold bath.

There are several other popular remedies against fever; but if applied by any one uninitiated they are inefficacious. Tobacco, tar, and verdigris are common, and of late years quinine has been in extensive use. Here is an odd cure.

A fever-stricken person is taken by the village wizard or witch by the hand and led into the open fields, where an ash plant, which must be greater in height than the patient, is sought out.

The wizard then produces his knife, and cleaves the sapling in two from the top to the root. Both halves of the top are then fastened together with the patient's belt, and the quack holds the two lower parts of the trunk apart, so as to form an opening.

Having previously divested himself of his clothing, the patient creeps beneath this, and the wizard hands him one by one his articles of dress, muttering the while some mysterious words. When he is dressed again the fever is supposed to be gone and the patient cured.

What we know to be dyspepsia is in Russia popularly believed to be a snake in the stomach, and it is said to find its way in while the patient is asleep on the grass with his mouth open.

Snakes are supposed to be partial to raspberries, and raspberries are used as the instrument of their expulsion from the human body.

The fruit is strewn on hot stones, over which the sufferer bends with open mouth, so that the snake, attracted by the smell, may make its exit.

Should it remain proof against this temptation, however, charms and incantations are resorted to and persevered in until the patient is better; when, as the snake's egress is not noticed, it is supposed to have been accomplished, but to have escaped observation.

Pains in the chest are caused, it is thought, by the sprouting of wings in that region, and the only means of cure is to break the said wings.

The patient is laid flat on his face while the old woman who acts as surgeon pinches the skin of the back from the shoulder-blade downwards.

The pain, as may be imagined, is intense, and the patient groans and screams during the operation, but otherwise does not flinch, although his back is covered with black and purple marks. He invariably professes to have been cured of all his troubles.

CURIOUS EFFECTS OF FOODS.—Darwin tells us "that hemp feed causes bull-finches and certain other birds to become black. The natives of the Amazonian regions feed the common green parrot with the fat of large fishes, and the birds thus treated become beautifully variegated with red and yellow feathers. In the Malayan Archipelago the natives alter in an analogous manner the colors of another parrot. These parrots in the Malay Islands and South America, when fed by the natives on natural vegtable food, such as rice and plantains, retain their proper colors.

One of the strangest illustrations in nature to be found of the curious effects of food is in the beehive. There the queen bee lives with the "worker" bees. When the queen bee dies another is procured simply by feeding a certain larva (which they put in a special cell) with what is known as royal jelly. An ordinary larva is fed on common food; but the queen is fed with this delicacy until maturity. Of course the queen is the fertile bee, and it owes its special functions to a special food.

Scientific and Useful.

WOOD PULP.—Wood pulp is rapidly being substituted for plaster of Paris in the manufacture of all kinds of building ornaments in France, where a new method has been devised.

TILLS.—A new till for preventing robberies is made with four finger-pieces, one of which locks the drawer. This can be changed in position, so that anyone who is not in the secret cannot open the till, but causes a loud gong to strike, by pulling the wrong finger-piece.

POTATO IVORY.—Much of the so-called ivory now in use is simply potato. A good, sound potato washed in diluted sulphuric acid, then boiled in the same solution, and then slowly dried, is all ready to be turned into buttons, poker chips, and innumerable other things that ivory was used for once upon a time.

THE "AUTOGRAPHOMETER."—An instrument called the autographometer has recently been devised which autographically records the plan of the ground over which it is dragged. It can be carried about on a light vehicle, and when in use indicates the topography and differences of level of all places over which it passes.

EDGE TOOLS.—It is a new idea to most persons that edge-tools not infrequently get "tired" and will not hold a keen edge until they have a rest. This is the testimony of carpenters, barbers, and wood-choppers. Locomotive engineers notice the same result in their engines. Possibly constant and hard usage may cause changes in the crystallization that would account for this peculiarity in inanimate things.

A WATCH FOR THE BLIND.—A watch has been invented for the use of the blind with a small peg set in the centre of each figure. When the hour hand is approaching a certain hour, the peg for that hour drops when the quarter before it is passed. The person feels the peg is down, and then counts back to twelve. He can thus tell the time within a few minutes, and by practice be can become so expert as to tell the time almost exactly.

IMPURE ICE.—There is an erroneous notion which is very widely spread, that the ice which forms on water is free of any impurities which that water may contain, and there is little doubt that many cases of disease may be traced to the confidence which exists in the truth of this dogma. Some recent experiments have been made which show that the notion has no foundation in fact. Various substances were purposely dissolved in water, which was then frozen, it being found that the ice forming upon the water contained rather more of the dissolved solids than a similar weight of the water itself.

Farm and Garden.

HARD SOAP.—Hard soap should be kept in a dry place several weeks before using. It will last much longer.

CRACKED DISHES.—Do not use cracked dishes; they absorb oils or fats from different kinds of food, which renders them unwholesome.

PIG-PENS.—Pig-pens should not be in the same location every season. By having them movable much valuable manure can be secured from the saturated earth around the old sites, while the change to a fresh place will greatly promote cleanliness and health.

LINSEED MEAL.—Linseed meal is an excellent medicine, as well as harmless, where there are cases of constipation of the bowels in animals, but it should be given moderately at first. One quart, mixed with ground grain, twice a week is sufficient for twenty sheep.

POULTRY.—By tying a small corn-cob to one leg, allowing it to dangle at a distance of about six inches, a Maine poultry fancier is said to succeed in keeping her chickens at home. The fowl can scratch and get about with ease, but will not attempt to fly over palings or squeeze through a crack.

EGGS.—There is but one secret in preserving eggs, and that is to keep them in a cool place, the nearer 40 degrees above zero the better, but not over 60 degrees. The eggs should be turned two or three times a week. No packing material is necessary. Simply lay them on racks and keep them cool.

PERSIMMON TREES.—The persimmon tree does not deprive the soil of a large amount of fertilizing elements, and for that reason makes the best of shade trees for stock. In the South, even on abandoned fields, the persimmon is allowed to grow. Its growth is slow, however, but its fruit is highly valued by some.

PASTE HARNESS-BLACKING.—Dissolve by heat four ounces of glue or gelatine, and three ounces of gum-arabic in three-quarters of a pint of water; add seven ounces of molasses and five ounces ivory-black in very fine powder; gently evaporate until of proper consistence when cold, stirring all the time. Keep in corked bottles.

TURKEYS.—When watching a turkey in order to find her nest, don't let her see that you are watching her, or pounce upon her when she is upon her nest. Keep an eye on her from a distance, but do not follow her close up to her retreat. Just take your "bearings," and then, an hour or two later, carefully search in that direction for the nest, and you will probably find it. If you remove the eggs as fast as laid, the turkey will lay twice as many eggs before offering to set as she would if the eggs should be allowed to accumulate in the nest.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST
FOUNDED, A.D. 1821

PHILADELPHIA, APRIL 28, 1888.

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Notice.

Our readers' attention is directed to the offer of *Premiums* on another page.

The Circle of Society.

Addison tells us that "there is a sort of economy in providence that one shall excel where another is defective, in order to make men more useful to each other and mix them in society." That society in these days is a mixture, and a most extraordinary one, is an undoubted fact; but the mixture is hardly in the sense Addison meant when he wrote of the utility of cleverness and mediocrity being blended, so that the one might counteract the other.

Now, the word society does not mean a number of more or less clever people meeting together, being of mutual advantage to each other, and constituting a tolerably unanimous whole; but merely signifies a certain "clique" or "set" to which we belong, possibly just a trifle above what would by right be considered our own proper sphere.

Mutual advantage is lost sight of in personal advancement—not advancement for any really good end, but simply "to be in society."

All its several cliques go to make up one imposing whole, termed collectively fashionable society; with the addition of the numerous unattached butterflies of both sexes, idlers about town, young and old, well born and shoddyites, hangers on to society, clinging as it were to her fringes—all pushing or striving more or less.

And so the crowd whirls on, those outside the magic circle moving heaven and earth to get within the pale; those within it dragging on the same millwheel round, trying to believe they are enjoying it, and deadening the higher, better feelings, which many of them must possess, in one incessant bustle; longing, perhaps, inwardly for something else, some real aim for their lives to live up to, but yet bound down to the treadmill of fashionable life.

For what? Ay, here's the question; but who feels equal to answering it? Do those who are in the world and move in the highest rank of society really gain anything by it? They have reached, as it were, the acme of their ambition, and have it in their power to hold out finger-tips to the jostling outer crowd still striving to be considered as members of the mystic circle.

Do they still care for the sweets—if there are any—in their self-chosen path? or have these all turned into wormwood and gall, and something else has yet to be striven and fought for?

The outsiders, the mixed multitude who are striving for they know not what, consider that when once they have firmly established themselves, got "all the best people" to attend their entertainments, and are asked in return to their houses, that then, blissful thought! they will be really in society and no more will be required of them. But when they get so far, they are insensibly pushed farther, until they find they cannot stop, and their whole lives are given up to the game of follow-my-leader.

The false aims and false desires of society are too frequently followed to the total extinction of all the best feelings and hopes of the soul. They lead to a thoroughly selfish existence.

Self alone is the motto of too many. Higher, nobler feelings are cast on one side, as not worth a thought. The brightness of the hour, the social triumph, "the mark made in society," the flattery of the million, are the only things worth living for.

Self-indulgence is more alluring than self-sacrifice. Personal ease and personal gratification come before thought for others or desire to help them. Really honest, true and noble natures quickly become perverted and spoilt in the fashionable race.

"Self" is society's watchword. But if once the eyes are really opened to the folly of those things, till now held dear, then the cure soon follows.

Many will be found to help us along; those once perhaps despised by us as "not being in our set," as mere "goody, preaching people, who mean very well, no doubt, but—" will now be found real helpers to us in our new and, at first, uphill road.

When thoroughly out of heart, and sick with the frivolities, the shams, the "make-believes" of the world's true followers—when our eyes are really opened to the vanity, the heartlessness, the downright folly of a life so lived—then we shall not be long before we find a fresh path, a better one, open up for us. Then we shall see the untruths, so little thought of before, in their right light; we shall break through the web of selfishness in which we have woven ourselves; learning to judge our actions by a higher standard, and forbearing to judge those of others.

How we delight to build our recollections upon some basis of reality—a place, a country, a local habitation! how the events of life, as we look back upon them, have grown into the well-remembered background of the places where they fell upon us! Here is some sunny garden or summer lane, beautified and canonized forever with the flood of a great joy; and here are dim and silent places—rooms always shadowed and dark to us, whatever they may be to others—where distress or death came once, and since then dwells forevermore.

THERE is no passion that so much transports men from their right judgments as anger. No one would demur upon punishing a judge with death who should condemn a criminal upon the account of his own choler; why then should fathers and pedants be any more allowed to whip and chastise children in their anger? It is then no longer correction, but revenge. Chastisement is instead of physic to children; and should we suffer a physician who should be animated against and enraged at his patient?

THERE is no happiness in the world equal to that of blessing others. Not only by giving money to the needy, help to the sick, food to the hungry, is this blessing compassed; we gain it as we give it, by sympathy, by affection, by seeing that which is best in our friends and shutting our eyes to that which is worst, and by taking joy in their good things, even when our own portion is scant and poor.

RICHES and honors are good. The desire to possess them is natural to all men; but if these agree not with virtue, the wise men ought to contemn and generously renounce them. On the contrary, poverty and ignominy are evils; man naturally avoids them. If these evils attack the wise man, it is right that he should rid himself of them, but not by a crime.

As surely as God is good, so surely there is no such thing as necessary evil. For by the religious mind, sickness and pain and death are not to be accounted evils. Moral evils are of your own making; and undoubtedly the greater part of them may be prevented. Deformities of mind, as of body, will sometimes occur.

IF thou desire to see thy child virtuous, let him not see his father's vices; thou canst not rebuke that in children that they behold practiced in thee. Till reason be ripe, examples direct more than precepts; such as thy behavior is before thy children's faces, such commonly is theirs behind their parents' backs.

THE Devil himself would be but a contemptible adversary were he not sure of a correspondent, and a party that held intelligence with him in our own breasts. All the blowing of a fire put under a caldron could never make it boil over, were there not a fulness of water within it.

BAD company is like a nail driven into a post, which, after the first and second blow, may be drawn out with little difficulty; but being once driven up to the head, the pincers cannot take hold to draw it out, but which can only be done by the destruction of the wood.

SLANDER is a poison which extinguishes charity, both in the slanderer and in the person who listens to it; so that a single calumny may prove fatal to an infinite number of souls, since it kills not only those who circulate it, but also those who do not reject it.

IF any speak ill of thee, flee home to thy own conscience and examine thy heart; if thou be guilty, it is a just correction; if not guilty, it is a fair instruction. Make use of both; so shalt thou distil honey out of gall, and out of an open enemy create a secret friend.

EXAMPLE has more followers than reason. We unconsciously imitate what pleases us, and insensibly approximate to the characters we most admire. In this way a generous habit of thought and of action carries with it an incalculable influence.

ANY one who is much talked of must be maligned. This seems to be a harsh conclusion; but when you consider how much more given men are to depreciate than to appreciate, you will acknowledge that there is some truth in the saying.

IF our Creator has so bountifully provided for our existence here, which is but momentary, and for our temporal wants, which will soon be forgotten, how much more must he have done for our enjoyment in the everlasting world!

LIFE is a warfare, and he who easily desponds deserts a double duty—he betrays the noblest property of man, which is dauntless resolution; and he rejects the providence of that All gracious Being who guides and rules the universe.

EVERY evil to which we do not succumb is a benefactor. As the Sandwich Islander believes that the strength and valor of the enemy he kills passes into himself, so we gain the strength of the temptation we resist.

HE that will often put eternity and the world before him, and who will dare to look steadfastly at both of them, will find that the more often he contemplates them, the former will grow greater and the latter less.

HAPPY is the man who has that in his soul which acts upon the dejected as April airs upon violet roots. Gifts from the hand are silver and gold, but the heart gives that which neither silver nor gold can buy.

THERE is nothing makes a man suspect much, more than to know little; and therefore men should remedy suspicion by striving to know more, and not to keep their suspicions in smother.

No lie you can speak or act, but it will come, after longer or shorter circulation, like a bill drawn on Nature's reality, and be presented there for payment—with the answer: No effects.

THERE are few occasions in life in which we are more called upon to watch ourselves narrowly, and to resist the assaults of various temptations, than in conversation.

EVERY man is an original and solitary character. None can either understand or feel the book of his own life like himself.

The World's Happenings.

Paper railway cars are suggested as a possibility of the near future.

A South Carolina widow has been lending money at 47 per cent. interest.

A list of plays which people in mourning may becomingly witness is published in Paris.

Electric slaughtering of cattle has proved successful in St. Petersburg. Death is instantaneous.

The latest idea in New York is a butterfly show, at which 100,000 specimens will be exhibited.

An Indian, who is "in love with American firewater," has been arrested 40 times at Port Huron, Mich., for drunkenness.

The following unique sign appears in Toccoa, Ga.: "Lamps fixed, razors honed, fresh oysters, Vienna bread and tombstones."

"Oh, Lord," prays an Arab, "I am going out to kill a man. Help me to be successful and I will respect Thy name forevermore."

So far this session of Congress about 9000 bills have been introduced in the House. Of the bills passed 85 were public and 223 private.

Mischievous youngsters in Long Island City carried their "April fool work" so far as to stuff 35 street letter boxes with decayed fish.

Some scamp recently decorated, in the night, the great door of Sing Sing (N. Y.) Prison with the legend, "Hair cut while you wait."

A Vermont minister, who preached funeral sermons over 121 persons, says he received in payment but two barrels of apples and a silver dollar.

Emancipation is progressing rapidly in some parts of Brazil. In the province of San Paulo the slaves are being set free at the rate of 500 to 800 a day.

The base ball fever has invaded the South in epidemic form, and the negro women and girls in some localities indulge in the great national game.

One of the most consistent Prohibitionists in Iowa is a clergyman who refused to marry a couple because the groom-elect was a saloon-keeper.

Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Dillard, who have enjoyed married life in Vienna, Ga., for twenty-five years, are exhibiting their first baby, born a few days ago.

A company has been formed in Berlin to manufacture electrical watches. Two small cells and a small electric motor take the place of the ordinary movement.

The authorities of Kalamazoo, Mich., it is stated, have secured a wholesale rate from a restaurant keeper, whereby hungry tramps will be fed for 60 cents a dozen.

In Paris, when a shopkeeper advertises "goods at cost," a government official inspects his prices and sees that he carries out what he advertises. Any fraud in this line is rigorously punished.

There are a dozen men in this country who, in a six-page magazine article, written at $20 per page, could prove that Alexander, Napoleon, or von Moltke didn't know enough to command a brigade.

There is still in force in Rhode Island a law forbidding the smoking of a cigar on the main street of any city in the State, and in Vermont the smoking of a cigar on the street on Sunday is made a misdemeanor.

A Kimball, Dak., justice of the peace has made the announcement that during leap year he will charge no fee for marrying couples who will admit that the match was brought about by the lady exercising her leap-year prerogatives.

"Three removes are as bad as a fire," says Richard. If this be true a family in Knightsville, Me., might as well have been burned out twenty-two and a third times in the last eighteen years, for they have moved sixty-seven times.

A tablet in an English cemetery bears the following inscription: "Here lies the body of Mr. Blank, who for many years conducted a highly respectable general business in an adjoining village, which is now continued by his widow. N. B.—No trust given."

From the edition of Geo. P. Rowell & Co's "American Newspaper Directory," published April 2d (its twentieth year), it appears that the Newspapers and Periodicals of all kinds issued in the United States and Canada, now number 16,310, showing a gain of 800 during the last 12 months and of 7,136 in 10 years.

Indians in the United States last year cultivated 227,265 acres of land and raised 724,858 bushels of wheat, 954,972 bushels of corn, 512,137 bushels of oats and barley, 124,010 bushels of vegetables and 101,825 tons of hay. They also owned 358,234 horses and mules, 111,467 head of cattle, 40,471 swine and 1,117,273 sheep.

The Duchesses of Montrose, Manchester and Newcastle are known in English sporting circles as the "Strawberry Duchess." Their graces have successfully secured notoriety, the first by her ownership of race horses, the second by her flirtations with the Prince of Wales, and the third by her elopement and subsequent marriage with a tenor singer.

A business man of South Florida adopts this novel plan to keep drummers out of his place, and he says it works admirably. Every morning he places a plug hat and a leather satchel on his counter. As soon as a drummer comes to the door and looks in he sees the plug hat and satchel, and he goes off believing that another one of the craft has that ground already covered.

Wichita, Kan., resorted to a unique measure to reduce its tramp population, which previously seemed incapable of diminution. Two freight cars were hired and, after filling them with the stern opponents of work, they were attached to an east-bound train, several guards going along to prevent the tramps escaping en route. The charges on the living load of freight were paid for 50 miles.

A DAUGHTER OF LILITH.

BY WM. W. LONG.

See her standing there,
'Neath the gaslight's glare,
That falls on her curls of gold.
Her eyes are bright
As stars of night,
But her heart is icy cold.

'Neath the moon's soft light,
On a summer night,
I offered to her my heart;
And begged the bliss
Of one sweet kiss
As my bosom I tore apart.

But cold as the breath
On the mouth of Death
Were the words she spoke to me;
They made as they fell
In my heart a knell,
Though proudly I took her decree.

A Mysterious Miss.

BY E. L. S.

WANTED: a lady of refinement and education, as companion to an invalid during the next twelve months. Age under thirty. Salary liberal. Duties irksome."

This was the advertisement the Denbighs put in a morning paper, when the "office" sent them hastily off to Lisbon for a year, and left, as mistress of their pretty place in Surrey, Mrs. Denbigh's delicate widowed sister.

There was no possibility of Mrs. Gwynne going with them. Doctors and common sense said "No" to that, so at Ashby she prepared to stay, and the only arrangement to lighten her solitude their united wits could contrive was embodied in the lines above quoted.

The invalid herself insisted on its last clause, so the Denbighs counterbalanced it by its forerunner; and either the bane was not sufficiently alarming or the antidote was overpoweringly attractive, but the morning after the notice appeared, no less than sixty-three answers were piled up on Mrs. Gwynne's breakfast-tray.

"Oh! to think I must disappoint so many," lamented the kind woman, regretfully laying aside some half-hundred missives; "I should like to send all these a little present."

"Nonsense, Mary!" laughed her practical sister-in-law; "do keep your thoughts to the point. Which of these odd dozen do you think seems likeliest to suit?" And cogitation presently determining on three, that number by the end of the week reduced itself to one, who might really have been made to fit the situation.

She was twenty-eight; undeniably a lady; graceful and quiet.

Clever, by the amount of her accomplishments; and the highest references from families in different parts of England testified that Miss Alister had always quitted them of her own free will, and invariably to their regret.

"Indeed, I am afraid you must be fond of roving," said Mrs. Gwynne to the young lady, smiling up at her in a peculiarly winning way of her own. "I hope you will not be running away from me before our year together is completed."

The color rushed over Miss Alister's face. Her eyes sank. "I will not go, I assure you," she said, most earnestly, "if I can anyhow remain. Oh! I hope I shall not have——" then she stopped in confusion, which puzzled Mrs. Gwynne.

"Perhaps she is not sure whether I shall be too irksome," was her after-comment to her sister. "I hope it's not that, for though I can't quite make her out, I really like her very much indeed." And this comfortable conclusion arrived at, preparations were pushed forward, and a fortnight later saw the "Lindens" left to the care of the widow and her new companion, "mysterious Miss Alister."

It was rather too bad, but so Mrs. Gwynne's friends, playing on the note of her first impression, persisted in calling the young lady, and between jest and earnest many were the inquiries made in gossiping little Ashby as to whether the new-comer had extended any confidence to her employer as to home, relatives, or antecedents of any kind.

The widow, though the mildest of women, became rather exasperated after a time by this influx of innuendo and surmise, and felt somewhat worried at not being speedily able to announce that she knew all about Miss Alister's history, and it was as common-place as most people's. This pleasure, however, evaded her grasp precisely as her companion made her desire it.

Every day Miss Alister won upon her regard. She was thoughtful, so patient, so ungrudging in care and tenderness, when hours of suffering imprisoned Mrs. Gwynne to her couch: so ready to catch the first signs of returning ease, and lure them on by cheerfulness or music—her voice was singularly sweet and sympathetic—so entirely, yet unobtrusively, the womanly friend the invalid needed, that Mrs. Gwynne was ready to unveil all her own life to her companion; and yet—and yet—to her chagrin, no answering candor was she ever able to extract.

Provoked though she felt at the conclusion, she was driven to confess Miss Alister was mysterious!

It was February when this companionship commenced.

By May not one iota nearer knowing anything of Miss Alister's story—if story she had—was poor Mrs. Gwynne. Then something occurred which increased her curiosity.

Up to this time no letters had arrived for the young lady: now three arrived by three successive posts: all—Mrs. Gwynne could not help seeing as she emptied the bag—in the same masculine handwriting; all from London, E. C.

With each of these communications Miss Alister's spirits seemed to sink. The steady cheerfulness Mrs. Gwynne, invalid fashion, was beginning to lean upon, for the first time failed her.

The effort to preserve her usual front was too patent to pass unnoticed, and on the fourth morning, when Miss Alister's pale face betokened downright fear of the letter—outward facsimile of the other three—handed forth to her, Mrs. Gwynne could keep silence no longer.

"You have a persistent correspondent, if you will excuse my saying so," she remarked, handing out the unwelcome missive. "I hope your letters are not unsatisfactory, Miss Alister; but really you have not been looking yourself for a day or two."

Miss Alister, with changing color, was glancing through her communication. Now she crushed it nervously up, gave one hasty look at Mrs. Gwynne's pleasantly anxious features, then seemed to take some quick resolve.

"I am quite well, thank you," she said slowly. "My letters are—only what I was expecting—but"—crimsoning as she turned her head away—"will you mind my making an unreasonable request?" ("Wants to go!" thought poor Mrs. Gwynne, in dismay.) "I have not been quite three months with you, but would you mind my having a quarter's salary? I—and I—want it."

"My dear girl, you can have it and welcome," answered the widow, immensely relieved. "Would you like a cheque or notes best?"

"Notes," faltered Miss Alister, with unnecessary shyness.

"Notes you shall have, then, directly after breakfast—and, pray, if you want anything else in any way," emphatically, "do ask me directly, for I feel I cannot repay half you do for me with mere money."

And the kind woman, thinking some little outstanding accounts at her last situation must be at the root of this embarrassment, stooped to bestow a re-assuring caress on Miss Alister's close-clasped hands.

To her surprise they trembled, so did the voice in which the earnest thanks were spoken. A pair of eloquent eyes looked up, as though they longed to tell the secret of this agitation; but mutely they fell again, and Mrs. Gwynne felt more mystified than ever.

That same evening Miss Alister brought Mrs. Gwynne a tiny case.

"Will you keep this for me?" she said timidly. "It was my mother's. If—if anything should happen—if I could not fulfil my time with you, I think it would repay what you have advanced me."

"My dear," cried Mrs. Gwynne, "I want no such security; why, this pretty ruby ring is worth ever so much. I won't have it. Keep it yourself. As it was your mother's, you ought not to part with it."

"Please take it for a little time," Miss Alister pleaded. "I feel as though it—as though I—were safer so;" and she was so urgent that Mrs. Gwynne yielded, and with amiable cunning turned from the subject with the question—

"Is it very long since you lost your mother, Miss Alister?"

"So long, I barely remember her," was the answer.

"And your father——?"

"Died just a little sooner."

"Poor girl! But you had relatives to live with?" (Mrs. Gwynne felt she was getting on now.)

"None near enough to wish for me."

"So who took care of you?" questioned Mrs. Gwynne boldly.

Her companion turned upon her a wistful smile, that softened her regular features into rare beauty.

"Some one was found for me," she said: "some one always has been. We had little money, for my father's living was small, and——" a confused blush filled in the pause—"but a distant cousin sent me to school. I was there till I could support myself."

"And have you no sister or close friend?"

"No, oh no, fortunately not!"

"My dear, why fortunately? You would be surely happier with some one belonging to you."

Miss Alister's grave smile faded. She opened a magazine.

"It is time for me to read to you," she said, and began forthwith, Mrs. Gwynne listening with divided attention, deeply desirous, for friendship as much as for curiosity's sake, of discovering what was in the background of this attractive young woman's life.

After that episode, however, no more letters disturbed the placid life at the Lindens.

Summer glided by without furnishing more food for Mrs. Gwynne's suspicions than the rather curious fact of her companion's wardrobe being as sparingly replenished as if she were receiving the wages only of a housemaid.

"Still, with no home or fortune, perhaps she is right to save," thought Mrs. Gwynne; and indeed the dark, noiseless cambrics did well enough for a nurse, which was what Miss Alister really was through hot July and August, and week after week the companion earned her salary with a care as devoted as if it had been paid with affection instead of gold.

"But you must make me get well now," cried Mrs. Gwynne excitedly one morning, as Helen Alister entered her room; "for my brother Herbert is coming back from India for six months: he is colonel now and the dearest lad—oh, what nonsense! I forget I am nearly forty and he is two years older. My husband was his great friend out in Calcutta. What he was to us through that—that dreadful time, and when my health broke down, none can tell. Now I feel as though it will make me strong to see him again. We must find him lodgings near, and get ready for him. And oh, Miss Alister——!"

"Yes?"

"Do allow yourself a pretty dress or two! Though he is an old bachelor (he never fell in love in his life), yet he has a keen notion of how a woman ought to look: so shall you and I go shopping next week?"

Miss Alister blushed. "Yes if—if you wish," she stammered; "it—if—that is, when you kindly give me the money.

"Why, good gracious! what have you done with last quarter's?" Mrs. Gwynne was nigh exclaiming. Luckily she stifled the words, and in the hurry of preparation for her brother, lost sight for a time of the strange impecuniosity implied by her companion's remark.

With the first week of September came Colonel Grant to the Lindens, and a new element entered Helen Alister's life, creeping into it, as such things do, all unawares.

Just what his sister called him, "as good as gold," this new-comer might have made choice of a wife long before if his standard of womankind had not been higher than most men's.

But through long service this bachelor officer showed no symptoms of changing his estate till leave of absence sent him to Ashby, there to find located by chance the very woman he seemed to have waited for through years and years.

Unpractised in the art of love-making, Mrs. Gwynne's brother walked serenely on the road whither his candid admiration for his sister's companion led him. The widow unwittingly ministered to the situation by insisting on Miss Alister's sharing every hour of the colonel's society. "She shall not feel she is friendless if I can help it," was her grateful thought. It was not in feminine nature to resist the influence which grew about her.

Helen Alister felt in the deference of Herbert Grant's voice, in his watching for her glance, his waiting for her words, a new, delicious thraldom, which to know by its right name was to know herself most miserable.

It was early winter before that point was reached.

All through October Mrs. Gwynne had been prisoner upstairs; some days only messages passed from herself to her brother, these always through Miss Alister. Constantly the pair had to meet, and the hours between the meetings were marvellously heavy to one of them, for fervor is not dead, young people in your teens who read this, even at forty!

In mid-November, when a bitter early winter was setting in, enlightenment came upon two of the trio at the Lindens in this wise.

An evening just over, when Alister had been singing to Mrs. Gwynne and her brother, he from behind the *Times* watching her every movement and expression, something queer happened as Colonel Grant left the house.

Taking a quick turn from the doorstep past the drawing-room window, he nearly stumbled over a man, intent apparently upon gazing through a chink of the Venetian blind on the room within. With a stifled oath the interloper sped off.

The next day Colonel Grant announced that he should bid the Ashby policeman make a special tour round the premises every night, as, "Whoever this tall fellow may be, he would prove no joke if he meant burglary, and he must be collared if he tries lurking about any more. Luckily you're not nervous, Mary, and," anxiously, "I hope you are not either, Miss Alister?"

"Not—very," was the murmured response, belied, however, by tone and manner. For Miss Alister was excessively pale, even her lips, white and hard, pressed together.

Colonel Grant took instant alarm. "You are timid! and very naturally. I'll speak to the inspector at once; the house shall be watched; perhaps this scamp can be traced."

"Don't—don't on my account," entreated Miss Alister, with the frightened look Mrs. Gwynne had seen once before "I am not the very least afraid of—burglars."

Then she hastily left the room.

Herbert Grant looked puzzled. "Is she ill, Mary?" he said; "her face is perfectly white."

"I rather fancy," was his sister's reply, "that can be accounted for without illness. Miss Alister had a letter this morning. Whenever she has one, as surely as possible she's upset. There is certainly something odd about her."

The colonel caught Mrs. Gwynne up very sharply. "Mary, mind what you say of some one who is not here to defend herself. I really think you owe a good deal to Miss Alister."

"And I should be the last to forget it," answered his sister warmly. "Still, as people said when she first came, she is mysterious, Herbert;" and our deep-in-love bachelor had to confess as much himself presently.

It was the same evening. The last post had just sounded its sharp knock on the front door of the Lindens, and Colonel Grant, entering the hall, found there Miss Alister, white as marble, leaning against the banisters just below the lamp, reading with terrified countenance a letter just received.

Such a pitiable scared look she gave him as she essayed to go upstairs, it brought him to her side instantly.

"Miss Alister, something is the matter. Let me know it. Let me share it. No, now, don't try and stop me. Come in here and listen."

He drew her *nolens volens* into the dining-room, and, making the trembling figure sit down, there told out frankly how he had learned to love his sister's friend, and how he wanted her to be his wife, and let him bear all her troubles, whatsoever they were. Twice, thrice she would have stopped him, but he made her listen to the end.

Then she gathered up her forces, and firmly put him from her, answering him "Nay," with an anguish that defied all hiding.

"I must not," she said, tears coursing down her cheeks—"I will not marry you! Forgive me. I thought you were only kind to me. If I had seen—this coming, I would have gone long ago!"

She would say no more, hearken to no more, but, breaking from his detaining hand, went straight to Mrs. Gwynne, and told her, weeping, she must leave. Might she go quickly, and when?

Pained and bewildered, the poor lady questioned vainly. Nothing could she get from her companion but entreaties for pardon at thus vexing her, "But might she go?" and at last reluctant leave was extorted for Miss Alister to quit the Lindens within a week.

"But for that week do try and get calmer and happier, whether or not you are able to tell me what has happened," begged the widow. "I should be miserable if you left like this. And then," hesitating,

"then too, my dear, you must not seem to hurry off as if you were in disgrace. People would say unkind things. To oblige me you must still join that skating party to-morrow at the Bruces', and at least let every one see we part good friends."

For answer Miss Alister could only kneel down and sob out her thanks, promising she would try; and then, as Colonel Grant's step sounded outside, she glided away by another door, and avoided seeing him again that night.

It was to a house some two miles off Mrs. Gwynne was driven next day, indisposed for joy festivities herself, but determined all the world should see the excellent footing she and her companion were on to the last.

By the bank of the little lake her brougham drew up, and Colonel Grant, earlier there in his dog-cart, came forward. He had kept his secret and Miss Alister's strictly to himself.

By-and-by he might tell one, when the poor girl was out of reach of possible sisterly comfort. Now he would not add a straw's weight to her care. In his own quiet, kindly way, "May I give you a skating lesson, as promised?" he said, and at Mrs. Gwynne's urging she alighted and went beside him—the last time she might be so walking—towards the ice.

"I brought skates from Ashby," he said, making talk to cover their mutual agitation. "Will you let my man fix them on? Perhaps he will be less clumsy than I. He is a new servant just come on trial, but I shall not want him long now; as soon as the New Year comes I will be off to Lisbon, and then on to India. Here is a chair, Miss Alister."

She seated herself without once looking up; the colonel's servant knelt down, skate in hand, his short-sighted master watching that all was done aright.

"Does that fit as it should?" he asked.

"They seem to do so, sir, if the lady finds them comfortable," said the man.

At his voice Miss Alister started violently.

Her lips moved convulsively, she turned her face, rigid as marble, from Colonel Grant.

"Now, are you ready?" he said, extending his hand. His servant rising, with a respectful touch of the hat, kept his eyes fastened on the lady.

"Will you," she, with ill-concealed effort, just managed to ask the colonel, "please see if my—my glove is in the carriage?"

And as he left instantly to do her bidding, she stood up, terribly pallid, and confronted the man servant—all other skaters at a distance.

"Well?" she said slowly.

"Well?" echoed he, with a sneer. "Are you going to keep on the high horse as you were when you wrote last night, or do you mean to make my fortune and yours by pairing off with this well-to-do chap?"

"I mean," she said, her voice vibrating with agony, "to bring disgrace on no one whom I—care for."

"Then," said the man, "as sure as I'm alive I'll pass the word round about us both: before you can get away from here."

"As you will," she said, ghastly as death; "that misery would be nothing to doing as you would have me do."

He gave one look, brimful of evil, at her set face.

"Curse you!" he whispered passionately, "you shan't be spared now. Be off for your skating, you stupid fool! I'll back to Ashby before you, and set my news flying!"

And this curious man-servant started toward the opposite shore, just as his master returned with Miss Alister's glove.

In a moment Herbert Grant saw something was amiss. "The cold is too much for you," he exclaimed; "we must get you back to the carriage. Giles, come here—quick!"

The man took no heed whatever.

"Come back; do you hear me?" his master cried more loudly. The fellow gave an impudent toss of his arms. "It's not safe there, I tell you!" shouted the colonel; "don't go another step!"

But the man, unhearing or unheeding, went on his way for a few seconds. Then there was a sudden bending of the ice, a crackling sound, a wild cry for help, figures rushing up from all quarters in dire alarm.

"Gracious help him! he has gone under," cried Colonel Grant. "Miss Alister——"

But Miss Alister's head slipped heavily on his arm. She had fainted out of all knowledge of present things.

When sense returned the scene was entirely changed. Miss Alister was lying on her bed at the Lindens, Mrs. Gwynne beside her—memory returning slowly. Is it a dream?" she whispered, "or was that awful accident real?"

"Only too real," answered Mrs. Gwynne softly; "but we want you to get better, my dear. Of course every one is sorry for him, but it is no use thinking of a poor drowned man."

"Drowned! dead!" cried Helen Alister, raising herself with a burst of tears. "Oh, Heaven! forgive me if I was harsh to him; he was my brother!"

At last, in the moment's excited grief, the whole sad tale was told: how Robert Alister, his sister's senior by ten years, had disgraced his name by forgery when scarce out of his teens; how father and mother had gone broken-hearted to their graves; how he, when long imprisonment was past, had haunted his young sister's steps, extorting the lion's share of her varying salaries, tracking her from place to place, unblushingly threatening to sir her relationship to a felon if she failed to satisfy his shameless demands. Coming to Ashby on some such mission, he had got scent of what was going on, and under a false name had taken service with Colonel Grant, the better to command the situation, and drive his sister into a marriage which should be a mine of wealth to himself.

So this cowardly brother had proposed; but another had differently disposed.

When Helen Alister, wan and sad, but with the old hunted look gone for ever, met Colonel Grant some few days later, and would have bade him good-bye—since assuredly she must now go forth again to fresh loneliness—fate, she found, had better things in store after her ten years of drawn-out misery.

"There are to be no good-byes between us, foolish child," said Mrs. Gwynne's bachelor brother; "Mary and I have arranged all. None else know or ever need know what you have gone through. I will only remember it to love you more. The Denbighs will be home with the New Year to take care of Mary. I must be off to India again, and you must come with me, my darling! Have you anything to say against the plan?"

He drew her to him. Her full heart sobed with thankfulness. "Had she anything to say against the plan?"

Nothing!

His Sacrifice.

BY E. E.

THE London and Brighton season was drawing to a close. Eleanor St. Almyr had made the most of the time allotted her by her father, and was now ready to return to Westmore, with Mr. and Mrs. Delmar, under whose protection she had been.

She had made a rich conquest, and returned to her suburban home that very important personage, an engaged young lady—that is, providing Squire St. Almyr should approve; and he had already gone so far, through the intercession of Mr. and Mrs. Delmar, as to accede to his daughter's request that the very wealthy and distinguished Mr. Carlos Martino Delancy might accompany the Delmar party to St. Almyr House.

Carlos Martino Delancy was some twenty years Eleanor's senior, was tall distinguished in appearance; but in the dark, handsome face there was something undefinably unpleasant; the hair was parted far down on the left side, and laid low over the forehead, as if to conceal some imperfection, giving the whole contour of the face an unpleasant expression.

But what mattered all this? He had twenty thousand a-year; and so it was settled, notwithstanding the disparity in age, the imperfections of the forhead—if any there were—or the unpleasant sensations which the Almyrs experienced upon their first meeting with the candidate for membership for the house of St. Almyr. Yes, it was all settled, and on the delicate white hand of the bride-elect flashed the costly engagement ring; and Carlos Martino Delancy had returned to London, where he had important business matters to arrange, as he said, in connection with his anticipated marriage.

To say that Eleanor truly loved this man would not be the truth; she was, however, contented.

Her lover had made her a long visit: but three weeks would intervene before the Christmas holidays, when he was to return to St. Almyr House to complete the arrangements for the wedding, which was to be celebrated in early spring.

The family at St. Almyr House consisted of St. Almyr himself, his two sons, Harold and Walton, and one daughter, Eleanor, the heroine of our sketch.

A bright fire burned in the library grate a few evenings subsequent to the departure of Mr. Delancy for London, before which were seated St. Almyr and his eldest son, Harold.

They had evidently been conversing upon some unpleasant subject, for the Squire's face was slightly flushed, and he tapped his slippered foot impatiently upon the velvet rug, hastily swallowing the contents of his glass, which he had held in his hand for some time.

"And pray, sir," he said, setting his glass down with such force as to shiver it to atoms—"pray, sir, what are your objections to this very fortunate settlement for your sister?"

"I can scarcely tell you, father," replied the son. "There is something in the man which I cannot describe, something which, in fact, seems indefinable, but something which strikes all at first unpleasantly."

"Humh!" half grunted the Squire. "I suppose you would rather give Eleanor to that beggarly farmer than to this gentleman with twenty thousand a-year?"

"Yes, father, I would. But let me correct an erroneous idea of yours. John Hilton is scarcely what can be termed a beggarly farmer. Hilton Farm is of itself a fine property, which, as you already know, the present possessor inherited from his grandfather, old Squire Hilton, whom I believe you always reverenced. And, besides, John is an educated man—in fact, a finished gentleman. He took his degree at Oxford only the year previous to my entering. And also, sir, since money seems to be the great recommendation which induces you to look favorably upon Mr. Delancy, I think, were John Hilton inclined to bid, he could show nearly, if not quite, as heavy an account at his banker's as the former gentleman."

"But what do you mean?" almost shrieked the Squire. "Why—why—did you not tell me this before? I thought John Hilton a common farmer and not worth a farthing until Hilton Farm fell to him."

"Well, my dear father, you thought so because you never took the trouble to inquire; but when he asked the hand of my sister in marriage, you turned him from the house and bade him never cross your threshold again, and extracted a promise from him that he would never seek to communicate with her; and thus she remains in blissful ignorance of the love of that noble man. I say "blissful ignorance," for such it is if she is doomed to marry another and less worthy man. But poor John, how I pity him! And, father, I pity my poor sister if she must marry this man to whom you have promised her."

"But why do you pity John so much?" asked the Squire. "If he is the wealthy and educated gentleman you say, why does he stay and work this farm? Why not let it out and have a fine establishment in keeping with his tastes?"

"So he will if he marries; but, poor fellow! he has some great sorrow at heart, and in this hard labor he finds more rest than in any other way of passing his time."

It was patent to the son that had St. Almyr known of John Hilton's true position, he would much sooner have given his daughter to him than to Carlos Martino Delancy.

"Harold," said the Squire, after a short pause, "you seem not to consider your sister's feelings in this very important matter, but believe she can be disposed of according to our pleasure."

"I believe, sir," replied the son, "that fortunately or unfortunately for my sister, she has very little true affection for her affianced husband—fortunately if he is to be discarded, but unfortunately if she must marry him."

"Humh!" grunted the Squire. "Who said anything about must marry or discarding?"

The son saw his advantage, and pushed it.

"I think, sir," he said, "that, under my influence, my sister would soon forget Carlos Martino Delancy, and learn to love John Hilton."

"Too late—too late!" muttered the Squire. "It can't be thought of. Honor—honor, my son!"

Taking a few strides up and down the room, and pulling out his watch, he exclaimed, "Eleven o'clock! Time we were in bed!"

And so St. Almyr House was closed for the night; but it is quite doubtful if the recent inmates of the library soon forgot, in the quiet influence of sleep, their evening's conversation.

Hilton Farm was situated about two miles from St. Almyr House.

The house was built after the old English style—low-roofed, large, square, and substantial. Probably there had never since it was built been a nail drawn, or a new one driven into any part of the building, so firmly had it been put together.

John Hilton and Harold St. Almyr were seated before a comfortable fire in the old-fashioned drawing-room a few evenings after the interview between St. Almyr and his son.

The conversation was evidently a painful one, for John Hilton had bowed his head upon the table before which he sat.

His companion had risen, and placing one hand upon the bowed head before him, said, "John, I beg that you will confide in me; not that I wish to penetrate your heart's secret, but because I think you will be the better able to bear your sorrows when you know them to be shared by a true friend."

"Oh, Harold," replied the sorrow-stricken man, "if the sorrows I bear were mine alone; if the secret and hidden worm were feeding only upon my vitals, how quickly would I lay them bare before you! But, alas! no; they are another's, which I am helping her to bear. Forgive me, forgive me, my friend, if I beg you will not press me further upon the subject to-night." Rising, and brushing away the traces of his emotion, he added, "But tell me of this Carlos Martino Delancy, the fortunate man who has won the heart and hand of your lovely sister."

"Say, rather, the hand than the heart," returned his friend. "Oh, John, why did you not seek to inform my father of your true position? For I feel certain that were not his word passed he would now far rather see my sister your wife than the wife of this Delancy."

"Ah, Harold, my friend, had I not been weighed down by sorrow I might have done so; but as it was, I felt almost guilty in seeking to win her love, knowing that she must share my sorrows, if she came to me, as well as my pleasures, which you know are few enough." Then he added, "But you do not tell me anything about him. How does he look? What is his general appearance?"

"His appearance is that of a studied gentleman; he is tall, easy in manner, very dark, and what would be termed handsome, yet there is something which strikes the beholder unpleasantly, which possibly may be attributed to the fashion he has of wearing his hair."

"How?" interrupting his companion, hurriedly. "What is the style? Tell me quickly!" he almost gasped, at the same time grasping his friend fiercely by the arm.

"Well, he parts his hair far down on the left side of the head, and brushes it very low over the forehead, as if to conceal some——"

"My gracious! my gracious!" interrupted his companion. "It is—it is—it is——" and he fell back into his friend's arms in a dead swoon.

Harold summoned Mrs. Harkins, the Hilton Farm housekeeper, a very faithful attendant, and one whom John had brought from London with him when he took possession of the place, and they soon had the satisfaction of seeing him restored to consciousness.

Waving Mrs. Harkins aside, he said, as soon as he could command his voice,

"Harold, you will think my emotion strange, but I beg that you will not question me at present. Allow me the opportunity of meeting this man when he comes to Westmore, and then, if my suspicions are confirmed, I shall be in duty bound to lay all bare before you, that your sister may be saved from a fate worse than death."

"Thanks! thanks!" returned Harold, grasping his friend's hand. "If only you could save my sister from this man, my gratification would be inexpressible. He will be down again next week, to spend the Christmas holidays, and you shall be a guest on Christmas Eve, when there are to be a few friends assembled."

"But, Harold, you forget; your father has forbidden me his house."

"That will be all right, John; have no fear. And now, as it is getting quite late, I will bid you good night."

Christmas Eve came, and with it the unexpected guest. The spacious drawing-rooms at St. Almyr House were tastefully decorated with holly and fern, and brilliantly illuminated in honor of the occasion; for a formal announcement of the engagement between Carlos Martino Delancy and Eleanor, the only daughter of St. Almyr House, was to be made.

Dancing had commenced, when the footman announced, "Mr. John Hilton," who was cordially welcomed by St. Almyr.

Carlos Martino Delancy was agreeably engaged in whirling the mazes of a delightful waltz with his affianced.

The music ceased, and Harold St. Almyr led his friend to the farther end of the room, where Delancy had seated his fair companion, while he had gone in search of an ice for her.

"Ah, Mr. Hilton, I am happy to see you!" said Miss St. Almyr, rising, and extending her hand to her brother's friend. "And allow me to present you——" she added, turning to Delancy, who had just approached.

But before she had concluded the introduction, the ice had fallen from the trembling hand that held it, and Delancy stood like one paralyzed, with eyes distended, and face of marble hue.

"Carlos! Carlos!" exclaimed Eleanor, terrified. "What is the matter?"

"The room—too warm—the waltz," he faltered, and staggered forward, and would have fallen but for Harold, who caught him, and drew him to the balcony.

But as he was about to fall, John Hilton had pushed aside the carefully-laid locks of hair from the forehead, revealing the long, ugly scar which he very well knew rested beneath the dark mass.

"Walter Thurston!" he exclaimed. "Villain! traitor! I give you one hour to leave Westmore, and if you have not made good your escape at the expiration of that time, the officers of justice shall provide a home for you."

By this time all was in a state of confusion, the guests having crowded to the balcony to learn the cause of the excitement.

Poor Eleanor had been borne away to her room by her father and maid, insensible.

To restore order, John Hilton, with Harold's permission, announced to the company that the man who called himself Carlos Martino Delancy was an imposter, and none other than Walter Thurston, a gambler and rouè—a man with already two wives, and very well known to the London police.

It may well be presumed that at the expiration of the time alloted to Walter Thurston he had made good his escape.

The company soon dispersed, and St. Almyr left his daughter in charge of her maid, and sought an interview with John Hilton and his son.

The house had been all closed; every light was extinguished, save those in the library, where the three assembled.

"Yes, Squire," said John, after they were fairly seated, "I must now explain myself, and by so doing tell a tale of sorrows and misery. I must tell how a young and lovely being, my own darling and beautiful sister, was betrayed by this villain."

He buried his face in his hands, a tear glistened in St. Almyr's eye, whilst Harold murmured, "Your sister, John, your sister? Why, I never knew——"

"No," interrupted John, raising his head, "you did not know I had a sister; but I have, and a lovely and beautiful being she is still, notwithstanding that her eye is less sparkling, and her step less sprightly, than when she first met Walter Thurston.

"It was not until she had been his supposed wife for a year that we discovered Thurston already had a wife living.

"After that dreadful discovery I thought London no place for us. My poor sister could never again hold up her head among our own circle of friends, and we decided to go away without leaving any trace behind us. Since then my sister has lived in entire seclusion, only having Mrs. Harkins, our old and kind housekeeper, and myself, for society.

"Until to-night I never again met the villain who ruined her life. And now, Squire St. Almyr, you know why I worked the Hilton Farm instead of keeping my proper position in society."

"Gracious bless you, John Hilton!" exclaimed St. Almyr, rising, and clasping the young man's hand. "Gracious bless you! You are a noble brother!" And the tears of gratitude rained down the poor old man's cheeks at the providential escape of his indulged daughter. "John," he said, brushing away the traces of his emotion, "if you can win my daughter, she is yours."

"Thanks—thanks, my dear sir," replied his companion, returning the hearty pressure of the hand. "I shall not take undue advantage of your present feelings, but will let matters rest for awhile."

I will not tire my readers with a long recital of the incidents which followed this evening's revelations; but within a few weeks the London journals announced the death, in a gambling saloon, of a man calling himself Carlos Martino Delancy, who, after losing his last shilling, had drawn a pistol and shot himself through the heart.

On the following Christmas Eve, St. Almyr House was again thrown open, and a large and fashionable company assembled to celebrate the double nuptials of John Hilton and Eleanor, only daughter of Squire St. Almyr, and Harold St. Almyr and Valerie, only daughter of the late Edward P. Hilton, Esq., of Grosvenor Square, London.

The Hilton Farm was let, for the old Squire wanted all his children at home, and St. Almyr House was large enough, he said, to accommodate them all, and any little waifs which Heaven might be generous enough to bestow upon them.

The Messenger.

BY J. G. B.

"PIERRE'S late to-night," said a stout, sunburned woman, who was standing at the door of a log hut on a small, rocky islet in the middle of the Rhone. "I do hope nothing has happened to him! He's so terribly venturesome since he got a boat of his own."

"Pooh, pooh!" answered her husband. "He'll come back all right, never fear. It's only proper that my boy should be a ferryman like his father, and so must learn to manage a boat. See, yonder he comes, rowing like any boatman!"

"But whatever has he brought with him?" cried Madam Lenoir, in amazement.

What, indeed! At first sight, the sturdy little twelve-year-old, who came skimming towards them across the broad, shining stream, appeared to be wearing a huge black overcoat, torn almost in two.

But a second glance showed the strange object to be a raven nearly as big as himself, which hung loosely over his shoulders, as if either dead or badly hurt.

"See what I've got, mother!" cried he gleefully. "I found it in the wood yonder, with it's wing broken. At first it snapped at me, and wouldn't let me touch it, but its quiet enough now. Isn't it a big one?"

"Oh, you dreadful boy!" his mother cried. "Do you think we're going to have that great ugly thing about the house? Who is going to feed it, pray?"

"Why, mother, you know you always say that this house of ours on the island is just like an ark; and Noah had a raven in his ark that he used to send flying about and why shouldn't we? Besides, we can teach him to carry messages for us, like that one Father Gregoire told us about the other day."

"Well, there's something in that," said Jean Lenoir, laughing. "And as for feeding, a raven can pick up his own living any day; and, besides, we have always plenty of odds and ends of fish. Bring him in, my boy, and we'll see what can be done with him."

The broken wing soon healed, and in a few months Pierre's raven (named "Christopher," in honor of the ferryman's patron saint) had become famous through the whole country side.

Many a bright silver franc did Pierre pick up at the village fair by making the bird go through the tricks which he had taught it; and when once it had learned to carry messages, the people along the river gave it so many that the postman used often to threaten it jokingly with a summons before the magistrate for taking away his business.

Even Pierre's mother got reconciled to the "great ugly thing" at last; more especially as the good priest of the parish, Father Gregoire, was very fond of it, and never came to see them without bringing something good in his pocket for "our friend Christopher."

Sometimes, indeed, as soon as the kind clergyman's black cassock and broad hat were seen on the opposite bank, Pierre would point and call out, "Bits, Christopher!"

And the raven, shooting like an arrow across the river, would perch on the priest's shoulder, and thrust his great black bill into the old man's pocket in search of the food which he was always sure to find there.

So matters went on until one night in the early spring, when Jean Lenoir, coming home tired after a hard day's work, paused for a moment, as he got out of his boat, to notice a strange leaden dimness that overhung the hills along the eastern sky.

"It must be raining hard up in the mountains," said he to himself, and then thought no more about it.

But at daybreak next morning he was awakened from a dream of being at sea in a storm, which seemed strangely real even after he was wide awake.

Doors were banging, windows rattling, timbers creaking and groaning, mingled with a roaring and dashing as if Niagara had been let loose close to his ear. Hardly knowing what he did, he sprang to the door and threw it open, and instantly started back as if he had been shot.

The water was within a foot of the door-sill!

Worse still, it was plainly rising higher every moment. The Rhone, swollen by the heavy rains and the sudden melting of the mountain snows, had burst its banks and come down in full flood, driven by such a gale as had not blown in those parts since the great storm ten years before. All sorts of things went whirling past upon the yellow foam—drowned sheep, hurdles, beams, boxes, and uprooted trees, upon one of which crouched a poor little shivering dog, wailing piteously for the help that no one could give.

Jean's first thought was for his boat; but both it and the shed in which it was moored were gone as if it had never been. Sick at heart, he clambered up into the loft after his wife and son, just as the water came flooding in over the door-sill.

Meanwhile an anxious crowd had gathered on the opposite bank, eager to help the imperilled family on the island. But how was this to be done? No boat could live in that boiling flood, and it seemed hopeless to think of getting a rope across.

The strongest man could not sling a stone so far. A kite would be instantly torn to shreds by the wind, and they had no means of sending across either an arrow or a bullet.

Poor Father Gregoire ran wildly from man to man, imploring them to save his friends, and meeting everywhere the same despairing shake of the head. And still the water rose higher and higher.

Suddenly Pierre put his mouth close to his father's ear, and screamed with all his might through the deafening uproar, "Father—Christopher!"

Catching his son's idea in a moment, the ferryman hastily rummaged out a roll of twine, one end of which Pierre fastened around the leg of his bird, which was, indeed, about to become in terrible earnest what they had called in jest, "the raven sent forth from the ark."

"Bits, Christopher!" shouted the boy, pointing to the opposite shore; and instantly the raven outspread its broad, banner-like wings, and swooped forth into the storm, while a stifled cry broke from the gazing crowd as they watched its flight.

I was all aground lost, as poor Christopher was almost beaten down by the struggling waters beneath; but the brave bird persevered, and catching a momentary lull in the fury of the storm, struggled across the space, and fell exhausted on the bank.

A stout farmer sprang forward to seize the string tied to the bird's leg, and instantly a dozen eager hands were at work on the cord attached to it. Communication was thus established with the island, and in less than half an hour the three Crusoes in the ferryman's hut were drawn safely ashore, just as the whole house fell crashing into the swollen river.

After this the raven became a greater favorite than ever, and from that day everyone called him "Christopher the Messenger."

THE DEAF MOTHER.—The following curious anecdote is related of the Countess of Orkney, who died in 1790. She was deaf and dumb, and was married in 1753 by signs; she lived with her husband, Murrough, first Marquis of Thomond, who was also her first cousin, at his seat, Rostellan, on the harbor of Cork. Shortly after the birth of her first child, the nurse, with considerable astonishment, saw the mother (evidently full of some dark design) cautiously approach the cradle in which the infant was sleeping.

The countess, having perfectly assured herself that the child really slept, took out a large stone, which she had concealed under her shawl, and, to the horror of the nurse, who, like most ignorant persons, was fully impressed with an idea of the peculiar cunning and malignity of "dumb folk," seized it with an intent of flinging it down vehemently.

Before the nurse could interpose, the countess had flung the stone, not, however, as the nurse had apprehended, at the child, but on the floor, where of course it made a great noise. The child immediately awoke. The countess, who had looked with maternal eagerness on the result of her experiment, fell on her knees in a transport of joy.

She had discovered that her child possessed the sense that was wanting in herself. She exhibited on many other occasions similar proofs of intelligence, not done so interesting as the foregoing.

OF USE TO WRITERS.—A recent article mentioned certain ways of making paper capable of taking ink when it has been roughened by erasure—as by powdered resin and by rubbing with a knife handle. But pray, have any of my readers ever heard of pounce? I do not know whether stationers keep it nowadays or not. It is a fine, white resinous powder—the cyclopaedia says powdered sandarach. A small bottle of it will last one a lifetime. Along with the powder used to be sold an elegantly turned pounce box, like a little wooden oil can, which would sift a small quantity of the pounce on the paper as needed. To rub the pounce in after it has been sifted upon the erased spot, use a small stick with a ball whittled on the end, over which a bit of chamois skin is tied, as on a painter's mahlstick.

IT is a great point of wisdom to find out one's own folly.

INSECTS AND THEIR WAYS.

I shall never forget, says a traveler, how astonished I was in the tropics to see, for the first time, ants nearly as long as my little finger, and of all sorts of outrageously brilliant colors.

The little joint which unites what I may roughly describe as the two halves of the ants's body is of such extreme fineness as to be almost invisible; and it used to be a favorite and, of course, reprehensible amusement of a certain naughty little girl I knew to divide the great red and black Australian ants in two.

When her parents and guardians remonstrated with her on the cruelty of this practice, her indefensible arguments were, firstly, that she was sure the ants didn't mind it at all; and, secondly, that they looked so much more independent, poor things!

Curiously enough, it was beyond doubt that the first proceeding of each dissevered moiety was to scuttle off in whatever direction seemed good to it, without any apparent reference to the feelings or opinions of its better, or worse, half; and I have most certainly seen that division of the insect on which, presumably, its head remained feeding with the utmost tranquility and admirable self-possession on a consolatory lump of sugar placed tentatively near it.

It certainly was an extremely difficult matter to believe that it was suffering in any appreciable degree whilst it exhibited such a remarkable and stoical contempt for convention and circumstance.

Let me give a word of bitter remembrance to the Australian flies. I have seen at dinner, within half a minute of the removal of the covers, a joint or fowl so covered with flies that it was simply as black as coal.

As for the poor horses and cattle, their tortures from the vicious little wretches are simply unendurable.

I have seen my horse's eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth perfectly masked with flies, biting and feeding with maddening ferocity.

I used to sympathize so acutely with the poor animal that I at last improvised a very [illegible], but completely effectual, pair of gauze blinkers and a species of nose-bag. I won't for a moment say that these appendages looked pretty, but they were very comfortable, and obviously appreciated.

I suppose we entertain usually an unqualified dislike to spiders, but in Australia they are respected—I might almost say cherished—as the natural enemy of the flies.

In South America the spiders are useful as capital, if reluctant, playmates for the children. It puzzled me once to see, some hundreds of miles inland, a little child playing with what I took to be one of those rough, brown, hairy crabs one sees on the fish stalls.

I was confirmed in the impression when I saw that the hapless crustacean was tied to a bit of string, and was, in fact, being "taken out for a walk."

Every leg of the spider was in actively violent remonstrance, and seemed to be trying to go in an opposite direction to its fellows.

Some of these spiders were about two or three inches in diameter, and with legs five or six inches long. In point of fact they only wanted larger fore-claws to make the resemblance to crabs quite complete.

Another tropical and shipboard horror is the cockroach, which is of a size and quickness quite unknown to us in America. I have a scientific relative who revels in the dissection of cockroaches, and assures those weaker-minded vessels who inspect her proceedings in a sort of tiptoe attitude of respectful distaste that cockroaches are most wonderful and typical insects. Probably they are.

They certainly ought to have some valuable qualities to counterbalance their disagreeable ones. Apart from this dissection, I do not remember to have seen cockroaches turned to practical account, except by Ah Lung, the Chinese cook of the ship in which we sailed from Melbourne to San Francisco.

He ate them! I had a morbid delight in seeing Ah Lung take down from a certain shelf in his galley a little stumpy black teapot, which, when uncovered, revealed hosts of lively, but uncomfortable, cockroaches in its depths.

There was a weird fascination in watching them wriggling about in the teapot in the highest state of activity, with their prawn-like feelers waving about, their countless legs, and their shrimpy, black balls of eyes that protruded with a sort of alarmed malice.

Ah Lung used to pounce upon the biggest—and those tropical cockroaches were big, many of them a couple of inches long—denude him of heads, legs, and shell, with an infinitely dexterous twist, and swallow him!

THE Superintendent of schools of Springfield, Mass., in a report on introducing kindergartens into public schools, says: "Those who have studied the system and observed its results generally concede the following: (1) The children trained by it are more responsive to moral discipline; (2) they are more intelligent, more exact observers, and grasp ideas more readily than others; (3) they make greater progress in school work, especially in arithmetic, drawing, and science in the use of language to express their own ideas; (4) this kind of training better than any other leads to industrial education."

THE reward of one duty is the power to fulfill another.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

An estimate was recently published by a Chinese paper of the real numbers of the Chinese people. For 15 provinces it purports to be based upon the return of the Revenue Board, while the population of 5 other provinces is estimated. The 15 provinces together in 1885 contained a population of 319,383,500 souls; the remaining provinces are estimated to contain about 60,000,000; so that roughly the population of China, according to this account, is now 380,000,000. The estimate is supported by three other returns.

A prophecy is widely current in Germany that the empire is to be greatest under a young ruler, who has but one arm and four sons. He is to succeed an ancient sovereign, carry on a great war successfully and prove another Frederick the Great. The Germans see in this the destiny of Prince William, who was born with one arm partly deformed—short and stiff. And they see in his character all the requirements of the prophecy, even down to the four sons. But the power of Germany will wane after this ruler, and she will go down and be an insignificant nation.

A despatch from Kansas City, dated the 6th, remarks that "last night the little daughter of A. O. Smith, [illegible] at Nebraska City, Neb., was pronounced dead from typhoid pneumonia and had all the appearance of death. The mother could not be persuaded to leave the little one. About three o'clock this morning her screams of joy awoke the whole neighborhood, and several persons entered to find the child sitting on its mother's lap, refreshed and apparently well. 'It has improved steadily since then, and is doing excellently to-night. The mother says that she was weeping over the inanimate form and was kissing the cold lips in an agony of grief, when suddenly the little one opened its eyes and the next instant threw its arms about her neck."

The medicine man's lot is often an unhappy one, and a recent occurrence on the Simcoe Indian Reservation attests this. It is thus related by a San Francisco paper: "A [illegible] was accused [illegible] ing it in the quaint and horrible custom of the Indian race. Several children have died lately, and Wyneco came to the conclusion that the learned doctor was the cause of [illegible] was given [illegible] to kill the latter, and by a strong restore the little one [illegible] the death of others. [illegible] Wyneco were of no avail and the child died. The murderer is in jail at Fort Simcoe."

The present director of the new theatre at Constantinople is an ingenious creature. He has for some time thought that he was paying excessive emoluments to certain of the performers of the [illegible] he has also reflected that [illegible] never know what to do with themselves between the acts. He therefore decided to utilize the intervals in order to hold a ballot. Every visitor to the theatre received, on entering, a number of ballot papers proportionate to the price which he had paid for his seat, and he was politely requested to vote for any one of the singers whose voice and acting might particularly strike him. Each evening the result of the balloting afforded the director a capital pretext for reducing the salary, or entirely getting rid of some inefficient members of his company. The comic tenor was discharged on the first night of the new arrangement, having only obtained two votes. Twenty-four hours later the second soubrette, had ten dollars a week taken off her salary, and on the third night the leading old woman was got rid of. Then the ingenious director ceased to issue any more ballot papers. The leading old woman was his mother-in-law.

Among the large number of memorials presented by the provincial officials of China, few are more curious than those praying for Imperial rewards for persons who have performed [illegible] that their deeds towards their husbands or betrothed [illegible] The Peking Gazette [illegible] province requests the bestowal of [illegible] orary patent" on a young lady who "since her childhood has been devoted to her books, and is imbued with high ideas of duty." The youth to whom she was engaged having died, she gave way to violent grief, which nearly cost her her life. She went to Canton where he died—to invite his spirit to return, and to offer oblations to his memory, and she is now waiting until one of her intended husband's brothers is married, in order that she may adopt one of his sons, and thus continue the line of succession. She is now twenty-four, "and fully resolved to lead a single life, and be a rare example to her sex." The governor expresses his sympathy with a girl of distinguished family who has been so suddenly deprived of the light of her existence. [illegible] is not a case of [illegible] until arrived for the ten years [illegible] the Yellow Sea, but, in the language of the [illegible] she has vowed that [illegible] she will have no other."

Our Young Folks.

THE SHINING PATH.

BY L. B. MILL.

A BUNNY poked his head out of his hole. "Whaugh how cold it is!" said the bunny, and quickly popped it in again.

A little shivering gnome was sitting on a stone in the bitter wind and deepening twilight. Chatter, chatter went the teeth of the little gnome. He bent down and picked a bit of golden bracken and wrapped it round his bare toes, but there was not much warmth to be got out of the bracken, and so the gnome's teeth did not cease to chatter. Then the little shivering gnome got up and crept away to the rabbit's hole.

"Bunny," said he, "I wish you would let me come into your hole and have a warm, for I am almost frozen with the north wind."

But the bunny was cross, and replied severely, "Why don't you go down underground with the rest of your ugly kinsfolk when the summer went, and then you would have been quite warm enough?"

"Oh, Mr. Bunny, it really was not my fault, for they went off in such a hurry and I lost my way, and now the path underground is closed again, and I am shut out. Do let me come in for a warm."

"Well," answered the rabbit, still crossly, "you can creep in a few minutes if you like; or if you lie still, and don't take up too much room, you may stay the night. But don't take it into your head that you can come every night. No, you must make arrangements for the winter, and not expect to live on your neighbors."

The wind blew colder and colder from the bitter north, and clouds, broken and dark, scattered swiftly before him over the pale sky. At last a heavy bank of cloud came stealing more slowly from beyond the mountain barrier; it shut out the last faint sunset-glow, and brought with it darkness and night.

By-and-by the wind became lazy and tucked himself away in the clefts of the mountains, and there fell asleep. And when he had ceased to blaster and all was quiet, there began a little stir—the sound of tiny voices and rustling wings—such sounds as can only be heard behind the silence which divides us from the fairyland that lies all around, and indeed so near to us that most of us never find it. And the reason is that we talk too much and listen too little.

And now out of the thick cloud came fall [illegible] and ridges, and crept off the rock points into the crevices, filling up all the chinks and crannies in the mountain sides, softly settling on the pine trees, and making a beautiful new world of their own.

But when the little white elves came to the heather and golden bracken in the valleys, and saw that the heather was still in bloom here and there, and that the cranberry plants were laden with scarlet fruit, and that the golden fronds were beautiful to look on, why, then the elves whispered together and said it would be a pity to cover up such pretty things; and so they melted softly away into little rain drops that slid off the leaves and flowers on to the moss beneath.

Just before dawn came the wind woke up and looked around.

"Dear me, my old friend," said he to the cloud, "you've been pretty busy all night; but is it not winter yet, you know, so I think you have done quite enough for one week." So the wind blew and blew, and drove the great cloud before him, and broke it all up into little cloudlets that went merrily flying southwards. When the sun came peeping over the mountain ridge the wind had got ready a beautiful clear sky for him to sail over.

"Bravo! that's well done," said the sun, smiling all over his jolly face at the wind; "but, hallo! what have we here? Snow in September, when I have the oats still to ripen. This will never do." So he smiled more and more brightly to try and make the snow melt away, and to ripen the oats.

The light found its way into the rabbit's hole and woke up the little gnome.

He was puzzled at the light and peeped out on the whiteness all around.

"Oh, bunny, bunny, come and look!" cried he. "The stars have come out of the sky and covered up the world, and they dazzle so that I can hardly see."

"Pooh, you stupid!" said the rabbit; "stars, indeed! It's nothing but that nasty snow. Pray when were you born that you don't know snow when you see it."

"Only last June, bunny. What is snow, pray?"

"What is snow?" answered the rabbit with great scorn. "Do you think I have nothing better to do than stand here explaining things to you," and off scampered the rabbit.

The little white elves laughed softly to themselves. "He doesn't know what we are, the old grumpatch," whispered they, "and so he could not explain if he tried."

The gnome crept out of the hole and hopped away on his little bare toes over the snow and moss. He blinked and winked with the light, trying to make out the pretty things about him. By-and-by he met a sheep gingerly picking its way over the snow, with its stiff black legs.

"Oh, fuzzy buzzy sheep, how beautiful it is!" cried the gnome.

"Baa-a! I think snow most unpleasant," bleated the sheep; "it takes my horns out of curl and makes my legs look so black, and I cannot find anything nice to eat. Baa-a!" and the sheep moved discontentedly away.

Little gnome went on in the sunshine: he really had no time to think how cold it was, because he was too busy admiring the world around him. Soon in his wanderings he reached the man, a heap of stones built on the top of a hill, to mark its highest point.

"Sshwew!" Sshwew!" whistled the north wind round the man, and the gnome felt as if it cut him in two with the cold. The man was an acquaintance of his, and usually a good-tempered old fellow; but to-day something seemed to have put him out; the cause of which is soon told. The day before someone had climbed up the hill and put a fresh stone on the top of the man, and this had made him very proud. But most unfortunately it was not securely placed, and now the wind chose to blow before the lichen had had time to grow over the new stone and make it fast in its place, and so the man was in a great fidget and flutter lest he should be robbed of his latest ornament.

"Keep away, keep away!" cried he to the gnome. "Don't you see the aggravating wind is going to blow my new stone off. Keep away, or I know it will fall on your head. Oh! don't bother me with your remarks, for I'm hoarse with talking already, first to the stone and then to the wind, and it does no good."

So little gnome hopped away again down the slope of the hill, till he found a sheltered ledge in the rocks, and there he curled himself up and gazed and gazed at the white mountain world.

First he looked over the ledge eastward, and saw peak beyond peak shining into the blue sky, and then he looked southwards, over the forest valley, to where the distant lake lay within its yellow shores; and out of the lake rose the white straw heads up and up, till they were lost in the white clouds. A sunbeam just pierced through the cloud and made a glittering path from the lake up to the sky.

"But it is a pretty world," murmured the gnome, "though the bunny and the sheep and the man don't like it. I should like better than anything else to fly away over to that shining path and climb up to the cloud world; but I can't do anything nice. I am nothing but an ugly, stupid gnome; and, oh, how cold I am!"

But though he shivered and his bare toes grew blue with the cold, he still sat gazing at the white path, and thinking how beautiful the world was.

And as the day went on the air grew full of soft voices. "Farewell!" they seemed to say. "Farewell! we are going away southwards to the warmer air. Farewell!" [illegible] move; but he saw from the corner of his eye [illegible] little bright hands of fairies, and he knew they were the summer elves making ready for their flight from the bitter northern winter, and singing their "farewell" to the valleys and streams.

Bright band after bright band spread their wings and flew away, and the gnome watched them. Away they flew over the forest and the lake, till they reached the shining path, and then up it they climbed in merry companies, till one by one they were lost in the clouds.

Softly the little wings fluttered, and softly the little voices sang "farewell." One group passed quite close to the frozen gnome, and they stopped and bent over him.

"We are going to the shining path, little gnome, and to the summer world beyond the clouds. Shall we carry you with us, little gnome?"

And then, as the gnome was too cold to answer, they took him gently in the arms, and away they went, over the valley to the lake, and along the shining path. And as they flew they still sang in joy, sweetly, "Farewell!"

MARJORY'S DOLL.

BY BRABOURNE.

THERE was once a little girl who lived with her old grandfather at the edge of a forest. The grandfather was a woodcutter, and every day he went into the forest to cut down trees, and let the little girl to take care of the house. Little Marjory (for that was her name) had not many toys to play with, as the children of such people are, but she had one wooden doll which her grandfather had once brought her home from the fair, and of this doll she was very fond.

She had given it the name of Helen, and when my story begins she had possessed it for nearly three months, which is quite time enough to find out all the good and bad which there may be in a doll. Marjory's favorite play was to take Helen out into the forest.

She might not go very far, because her grandfather had told her that there were wolves and bears in the forest and she might easily get into some misfortune if she wandered a long way from home.

But there was a little stream which ran past the cottage only about a hundred yards off and it flowed on into the forest afterwards, turning and twisting about, and gurgling and tripping on its course, just for all the world as if it was talking to itself, or perhaps telling the forest trees of all the strange places it had been to, and all the wonderful things it had seen in the world beyond.

It was to this stream that little Marjory loved to go, with Helen in her arms.

One day the little girl had gone out as usual after her morning's work was done, and had found a very cosy seat at the foot of a large beech tree, whose roots reached down to the edge of the little stream.

Down she sat, and taking Helen on her knee, began to tell her the prettiest story she could think of at the moment.

"See," she said to the doll (who sat quite still and never said a word, for it was not the habit of dolls in that country to speak), "see how quickly the water is flowing along, and how cheerful its language as it flows! Do you see that little branch of oak which it is carrying with it, tossing it to and fro as if it were a plaything? Look how it dances about from side to side, that little branch, as if it was glad to get away from the tree on which it grew, and to see a little of the world. And look again! just after the oak branch comes a tuft of grass which has somehow or other fallen into the stream, and close behind the tuft of grass comes a——Why, what ever is this?"

Little Marjory stopped short in her speech to the doll, for she saw something coming which surprised her so much that she did not know how to go on.

There was a cocoa-nut shell, only it was three times the size of any cocoa-nut shell that anybody has ever seen at dessert or in the shops, and it was shaped in the shape of a boat, and came sailing down the stream as if had been used to do so all its life. Perhaps it had, but that was not the most extraordinary thing about it. In the boat, standing upright and seeming to enjoy the sail as much as if she had been a born sailor, was a little lady, not a bit bigger than Helen herself, only she was of a different appearance, and wore a very different dress from the doll, who had on a cotton gown and a straw hat, and had no ornaments about her.

The little lady who now approached was dressed from head to foot in a dress of white and gold, which sparkled upon her as if it had just come from the smartest ladies' dressmaker that ever was known. On her head she had a crown of silver oakapples, and around her neck was hung a necklace of costly pearls and diamonds, which added greatly to the beauty and magnificence of her appearance.

It is no wonder that little Marjory was struck dumb at the sight of this glorious little figure, and I do not think that she would have found her voice again soon if the new comer had not spoken first, which she very soon did.

By some means which Marjory could not see at the moment, the little lady steered her boat from the middle of the stream to the side, and springing lightly out upon the bank, came and stood opposite to the child and her doll.

"Good morrow, Marjory," she said, and Marjory was more [illegible] ever at the moment when she found that the lady knew her name, and she opened her eyes very wide and looked at her with the greatest surprise.

"Ah!" said the lady, "I see that you do not know who I am, and it is not very likely that you would. But I know you very well, my child, and I know that you are good and kind, or else I should never have trusted my daughter to your care."

At these words Marjory was more surprised than ever, and opened her eyes still wider than before.

"Yes," continued the lady, "you do not know what I mean, but you soon will know. I am the Fairy Corina, and my power is very great. The doll you call Helen is my daughter Araminta. By the laws of Fairyland, the daughters of fairies who wish to inherit their mothers' magical power are obliged to assume different forms for a certain time before they are able to do so, generally they have to become for a number of months of that sort, in which case they run great risk of being hurt or killed by strangers as human and liable to ill of trial is a dreadful time to the fairy parents. But I was permitted to arrange matters so that my Araminta should pass part of her time as a doll. She became a doll some few months ago, and has now just completed her time. It was I who arranged that your good grandfather should buy her at the fair, because I knew that you would treat her well and be fond of her. With you I knew she would be safe from dangers, and now that I have come for her I know I shall receive her back safe and sound."

When she had thus spoken, the lady gave a low and peculiar whistle, and waved her hand at the same time.

In an instant, to Marjory's great surprise the [illegible] stretched out her arms and legs, shook herself, and in another moment stood before her astonished mistress in the form of a real live person, bearing a marked resemblance to the little lady who had thus called her to life.

Turning to Marjory, who immediately made a very low courtesy, and would not dare to look at her without saying a word, the Fairy Corina, however, proceeded to say something more.

"Daughters of fairies," she said, "do not always take their changes as they should, and Araminta has gone through this time before she was ready to part with you, and I fear will be in a very naughty humor, and will not forget your kindness. Araminta, however, loves you well, and will not forget your kindness. I must say good-by to you now, but believe that my daughter are unselfish, and you will find nothing by your kindness to my child."

With these words the fairy passed her hand twice before Marjory's eyes, and the child immediately fell into a deep sleep.

When she awoke, she thought she had been dreaming, and felt all round for Helen, but no Helen was there! She sat up and rubbed her eyes, and then looking round again found that instead of Helen there were to be seen close by her side a white cat, a pigeon, and a brown paper parcel.

The cat looked up in her face and purred with joy, as if it had known her all its life; the pigeon cooed in a manner peculiarly sweet and affectionate, and although the brown parcel could not speak, it was most satisfactory in every way, for when Marjory opened it, she found it contained a workbox, full of useful things, and in fact there was scarcely anything which a reasonable girl could want for household purposes, which was not to be found in that workbox.

Marjory clapped her hands with delight when she saw those beautiful presents which the Fairy had left, and only wished she could see her to thank her for them. You may fancy how pleased the old grandfather was when he came home in the evening and Marjory told him all that had happened.

You may also fancy how useful the cat, the pigeon and the workbox proved to be, and if anybody wants to know more about them, he has only got to go and ask the old white owl in the barn, who can tell the whole history of Marjory's life in the forest, and how the Fairy Corina was her firm and true friend all the days of her life.

LAUGHTER.—Some people laugh in a delightful, mirth-provoking way that infects all within hearing, while, in the case of others, the laugh is the weakest and most characterless thing about them.

When Washington cared to break through his natural reserve, he could laugh as long and loud as any one, but his biographers record but few instances of the display of jocularity on the part of the father of his country. Lincoln laughed often, always welcoming a good story teller, and relating with much good feeling droll tales of his own life. Webster could tell a good story, often at his own expense, and join heartily with his hearers in the laugh at the end. He had a true laugh.

It is said of Nelson that his laugh was often without spirit. Napoleon laughed little, and not always at things in which men of his commanding dignity might have been expected to find anything funny.

There are those men, as Carlyle has tritely remarked, whose laugh is as untrue as anything about them. In the Bible the words "laugh," "laughter," and "laughing" occur only thirteen times, which, while in keeping with the gravity of the text, is considered by some commentators as rather singular. Milton makes little use of the word in his works. Shakespeare employs it frequently, and often epigrammatically.

Tennyson's men and women laugh infrequently, although they sometimes smile. Dickens made much of the laugh, and often managed thereby to give the reader a clue to the character of his men and women. Like the careful student of human nature that she was, George Eliot made note of the thousand and one ways in which character discloses itself through the medium of the laugh.

Men reveal or betray themselves by their laughter as often as anything. The fool's laugh is said to be shallow, the knave's cunning, the drunkard's coarse, the lunatic's wild and meaningless.

If a man would not disclose his character let him not laugh. He may simulate good nature and even friendship by smiling, but he should beware of audibly expressing his real or pretended mirth, for there are those—and they are not necessarily deep students of human nature—who know that the true laugh comes only from the true man.

THE DOMESTIC MUSCOVITE.—All the smart people do not live in the United States. None of them live in Russia, in proof of which the following statement of facts is submitted:—

In the vicinity of Rubitshew, the wealthy farmers were very much annoyed by field mice, which destroyed the corps. The damage done by the mice assumed such proportions that the farmers held a meeting, and offered a reward for the destruction of the vermin.

A small sum was paid for each mouse destroyed, the tails of the rodents being accepted as proof of their destruction.

In a short time a great number of mouse tails were presented to the presiding magistrate, who paid over the premium.

The wealthy farmers, however, could not help observing that the damage done by the mice did not decrease in the least. On the contrary, there seemed to be more mice than ever.

One of the wealthy farmers set some traps himself, and he was struck with the singular fact that a number of the captured mice were as destitute of tails as modern man.

The cat, or rather the mouse, was out of the bag. An investigation disclosed the fact that the peasantry engaged in supplying mouse tails did not kill their victims. On the contrary, after the mouse was deprived of the tail, on which there was a premium, he was turned loose to assist in replenishing the fields with more mice.

"HERE'S a curious thing in the paper. A man in a Florida town persisted in playing the piano half the night, and a man who lived next door killed him." "Well, Well! That man went to far." "The man that did the killing!" "No, the man that did the playing."

The injury the world does us is seldom equal to the injustice we offer ourselves.

WHEN WE ARE DEAD.

BY SUSIE M. BEST.

The sun will glow,
The rivers flow,
The lights and shadows come and go;
The stars at night
Will shine as bright
As tho' we looked upon their light.

The lips we kiss
Will cease to miss
The touch we lay on them I wis;
The eyes we bless,
The hands we press,
Will find another to caress.

But nevermore,
When life is o'er,
And we are on another shore,
Will we e'er know
A throb of woe
For any cause on earth below.

When you and I
Shall come to die
No fear upon our heart shall lie,
With placid breast
Secure we'll rest
By not a worldly care oppressed.

The galling chain
Of earthly pain
Will never trouble us again.
For you and me
What peace there'll be
When souls shall claim their liberty.

BY ACCIDENT.

Some of the greatest discoveries and happiest experiments in the various branches of science have been made by accident. Nature indeed is profuse in hints, and men of genius know how to take them.

It is said that James Watt took the lobster's tail for his model when he was constructing pipes to convey water to Glasgow from the opposite side of the Clyde: the pipes were made to fit one into the other, like the joints of a lobster's tail, so that they might adapt themselves to the form of the bottom when laid across the river.

Brunel acknowledged that he had taken his first lesson for forming the tunnel under the Thames from the shipworm, as he observed it perforate with its well-armed head the wood, first in one direction and then in another, till the arched way was complete, and then daub over the roof and sides with a kind of varnish; by copying this work exactly, on a large scale, his great undertaking was accomplished.

The art of portrait painting is believed to have had its origin in accident. Corinthia, a young girl of Greece, discovered her beautiful lover asleep; the lamp, which burned beside him cast the shadow of his profile on the wall. Struck by the likeness, and inspired by love, she traced it, and thus produced the first specimen of the delightful art.

Sounds that might be lost on common ears have "touches of sweet harmony" for the poet and the minstrel; "the winds that pass heedlessly by," the murmuring of the rill, the sublime rushing in of the impetuous tide, or the wild storm as it sweeps along, are often the vehicles of inspiration; even the hammer of the blacksmith suggested a subject for one of Haydn's most charming compositions; from his cat walking over the keys of his harpsichord, and sounding a few notes at irregular distances, Scarlatti caught the idea of one of his favorite fugues.

Every variation of light and shade, every movement of object on which he looks, is suggestive of some new conception to the painter.

The child of a beggar stood as a model to Sir Joshua Reynolds as he painted, but the little girl, overcome by the fatigue of remaining in the same posture, fell fast asleep; the innocent looks and the graceful attitude of the sleeping child, instantly called to his mind "the babes in the wood," and he sketched her likeness; but where to find the model for the other babe was the difficulty. Just then the child turned in her sleep, and, by an entire change of position in the head and person, furnished a most beautiful subject for the completion of his picture.

It has often happened that what has cost hours of unavailing labor has been effected in some unforeseen manner in a moment. An artist in vain tried to give the drapery, about which he was employed in his picture the graceful folds which alone could satisfy him. Vexed at his failure he was about to put his painting away, when the servant entered the studio, and, putting to rights such things as fell in his way, he threw his master's ample cloak across the stand. It fell into those graceful folds so much longed after by the painter, and he renewed his task with renovated spirit.

We have heard of another, who, in despair of imparting the expression of the excitement and the heat of the chase to the noble horse he was painting, flung his brush impatiently away. It splashed upon the nostrils of the horse, and represented at once the foam, which was all that was required.

It was from the listlessness of fatigue, while waiting for his mother in the house of her confessor, that Vaucanson sauntered into the hall, not knowing what to do with himself. The uniform motion of the pendulum of the clock which stood there attracted his notice.

He went over to examine it more closely. He became interested in its mechanism and guessed at what he could not see. He set himself to work, and, in process of time, produced a clock of his own workmanship; and so successful did he become in the pursuit of mechanics that an automaton, which played on the flute, was the fruit of his ingenuity.

Often a book, taken up at random, with no other design than the turning rapidly over of its pages, or casting on them a hasty glance, has been known to call forth energies and cababilities whose existence were not known.

The medical profession has been indebted to chance for some of its most valuable acquisitions; and there are few of its practitioners who do not find in their daily practice the good or ill which it effects.

A celebrated physician, who was as remarkable for the deep interest he took in his patients as for his skill, had been in attendance upon a very irritable old lady for some time, and had bestowed great attention on her case, and felt great anxiety to alleviate her sufferings. All the means he could think of were tried, but the effect which he sought to produce was not in his power, and he saw that she was gradually sinking.

As he paid his accustomed visit one morning, he found her lying in a state of stupefaction, and with very alarming symptoms. He thought it right to apprise her friends that her last hours were approaching.

"My dear young lady," said he to her relation who accompanied him to the room door, "I am sorry to tell you—very sorry—but your poor aunt cannot hold out for four-and-twenty hours."

"And pray, who told you that, and how dare you say it?" said the old lady, bouncing up with an effort of strength that appeared quite supernatural, and sitting bolt upright—"how dare you say it!"

She was in a violent passion, and, as she vehemently held forth in abuse of her doctor, the excitement produced all that was necessary: the abscess which had been the sole cause of her illness, broke from her exertion; she got immediate relief, soon recovered, and lived for many years, doubtless to the extreme disgust of her expectant heirs

Grains of Gold.

Slander is the solace of malignity.

Keep your own secrets if you have any.

Never morning wore to evening but some heart did break.

If you utter affronting speeches, you will have to hear them.

Judge of people by their questions rather than by their answers.

An effort made for the happiness of others lifts us above ourselves.

In a better year we will find our young years and our old friends.

All controversies that can never end had better perhaps never begin.

Do not anticipate trouble, or worry about what may never happen. Keep in the sunlight.

Slander meets no regard from a noble mind; only the base believe what the base only utter.

Heaven's gates are not so highly arched as princes' palaces; they that enter there must go upon their knees.

Nothing is rarer than a solitary lie; for lies breed like Surinam toads; you cannot tell one but out come with it a hundred young ones.

He that fancies himself very enlightened because he sees the deficiencies of others may be very ignorant, because he has not studied his own.

In the same degree that we overrate ourselves, we shall underrate others; for injustice allowed at home is not likely to be corrected abroad.

Femininities.

Important, if true—A wife.

The town council of Syracuse, in Kansas, is composed entirely of women.

Virtue in its grandest aspect is neither more nor less than following reason.

Girls under 21 years of age can no longer serve in the Parisian beer saloons.

Scandal, like a reptile crawling over a bright grass, leaves a trail and a sting.

Nothing will turn a woman's head so completely as a bonnet that has passed by.

A time for all things. The time to leave is when a young lady asks you how walking is.

A number of pretty girls have been appointed ushers in the Congregational Church at Ottawa, Kan.

"What is more lovely than a peaceful grandmother?" asks a contemporary. Her granddaughter."

There isn't much difference between a grass-widow and a grasshopper after all. Either is sure to jump at the first chance.

"You will join our society for the suppression of slang, will you not?" asked Ethel of her friend Madge. "Why, cert!" was the ready reply.

"I guess we have so many things to learn at our schools that we don't have any room to understand them in," said a little Boston girl, pathetically.

Female visitor, to condemned murderer: "Are you prepared to die?" Prisoner: "No, mum; not jist yet. There's a feller in 345, mum, that's very fond of talking."

A Tennessee matron lately picked up a bombshell and laid it in the old-fashioned fire-place. The new house which is to be built on the site will have all the modern improvements.

A California recipe for cooking sausages is unique. The sausages are split and broiled, and when dished are sprinkled with lemon juice. Bread fritters are served with the sausages.

"I know it," said the bereaved widower, gloomily, to the friend who was trying to console him; "no amount of grievin' will ever bring her back. Nancy was allus terribly set in her ways."

A coquette is a young lady of more beauty than sense; more accomplishments than learning; more charms of person than graces of mind; more admirers than friends, and more fools than wise men for attendants.

"My dear," said a dying man to his wife, a very fashionable woman, "when I am gone, will you erect a monument in my honor?" "If you wish it," sobbed the lady; "but, John, monuments are getting to be so common."

She: "Lewis, if I die, promise me one thing." He: "What is it, Mary?" She: "That you will marry Emma Wilkins." He: "Why I thought you hated her, Mary?" She: "I do, indeed. Lewis. I want to get even with her."

"You think, then, that your husband no longer loves you as formerly?" "Alas! I am sure of it." "What proof have you?" "What proof? Why, my dear friend, when he kisses me now he doesn't even disturb my face powder."

"I fear that Harry is getting desperate. He left me in a terribly agitated state last evening, and threatened to do something that he might regret all his life." "Did he? Then it seems he has really made up his mind to ask you to marry him."

"Why, mamma! You surely are not going to see that dreadful play?" "Arabella," replied the New York matron, buttoning her gloves, her eyes moist with self-sacrificing tenderness, "I feel it my duty to see it, so I can intelligently warn you against it."

"You shouldn't have taken 'No' for an answer so readily, Charley," said his more experienced friend. Don't you understand that a girl's 'No' often means 'Yes'?" "She didn't say 'No,' Jack," responded Charley, utterly without hope; "she said 'Naw.'"

The children in the next room were very noisy, and mamma told 4-year-old Bessie, sitting beside her, to shut the door. Bessie closed it, but the noise was still painfully audible. "Mamma," she said, looking up with a countenance indicative of a bright idea, "Mamma, I dess I better lock it!"

An actress who was christened Mary Ann when she was too young to apply to the courts for an injunction, has changed the name to Marianne, and the style is becoming quite popular. It won't be long before we'll have Lucijanne and Rosyltishe. As a gentleman whose address has been mislaid once remarked, this is indeed a progressive age.

A prominent doctor thinks the reason our teeth decay so fast is because we do not use them enough, and, like other organs that are not exercised, they tend to atrophy. Our teeth become weak because they are unused to hard work. The physician warns mothers and nurses not to give the children soft food if they would have them have good teeth—in other words, make them eat their crusts.

Mother: "Why, my dear, you don't seem a bit happy." Recently married daughter: "I am about as happy as most wives, I suppose." "Doesn't your husband treat you well?" "Oh, yes, in a humdrum sort of way. He's a very ordinary, every-day sort of man." "Oh, well, my dear, girls can't expect to be pirates' brides in this practical age, you know." "I suppose not." "No. I know what's the matter. You need excitement. Get a servant girl!"

It is said that 40 per cent of all the deaths from poison in Great Britain are due to opium; and this rate of mortality, according to Dr. Blythe, "arises in a great measure from the pernicious practice, both of hard-working English mothers and the baby-farmer of giving infants 'soothing syrups,' 'infants' friends,' and the like, to allay restlessness and keep them asleep during the greater part of their existence." It has been calculated that one preparation alone is the undoubted cause of death of 150,000 children every year.

Masculinities.

Stop before you allow temptation to draw you away from the paths of honor and integrity.

"Will the coming man use both arms?" asks a scientist. Probably, if the coming woman can be trusted to hold the reins.

No matter how eloquent a man might be, he couldn't win a girl's heart by quoting poetry to her when he has a cold in his head.

An impecunious negro in Savannah, Ga., stole a watch, and with the advance given him on it at the pawn shop took out a marriage certificate.

A member of the Kansas Legislature was recently hung in effigy, and a disgusted political opponent says: "History may well ask—Why in effigy?"

You will never hear the introductory phrase, "I may say without vanity," but some striking characteristic instance of vanity is sure to follow.

Listen not to a tale-bearer or slanderer, for he tells thee nothing out of good-will; but as he discovereth of the secrets of others, so he will of thine in turn.

A sensible girl on being asked by her father how she would like a nice, respectable husband of 50, answered by saying that she would rather have two of 25 each.

Paterfamilias, in bed: "Is that young Sampson still in the parlor with Clara?" Materfamilias, listening: "I think he is. Everything is very quiet down there."

Jack: "What! Are you smoking cigarettes?" Harry: "Yes, dash it all! Cora refused my offer of marriage last night, and I don't care now what becomes of me."

An Omaha paper alluded to a number of prominent and influential members of the city as "old-timers," but the types got it "old terriers," and the editor had to apologize.

An English peer whose revenues have been reduced to a minimum has lately accepted an engagement as "town traveler" to a well-known firm of pianoforte manufacturers.

A witty lady says: "If you want to find out a man's real disposition, take him when he's wet and hungry. If he's amiable then, dry him and fill him up, and you have an angel."

Though people may have no interest in what they say, we must not, therefore, conclude absolutely that they are not telling a lie; for there are people who lie simply for the sake of lying.

There is no such fop as my young master of his lady-mother's making. She blows him up with self-conceit, and there he stops. She makes a man of him at twelve, and a boy all his life after.

A young man doesn't weigh any more than usual when he has on his first silk hat, and probably he doesn't look any larger to strangers, but he always feels his responsibility nevertheless.

It is a curious fact that when a couple get married all their male acquaintances cannot see what she could have seen in him, while all their female friends are equally blind as to what he could have seen in her.

Sad-eyed wanderer: "Say, my friend, can't yer help a poor feller wot has lost his only means of support?" Sympathetic listener: "Eh? How did it happen?" "Well—er—you see my wife died this morning."

When a lady enters a crowded car no one more deeply appreciates the courtesy of him who gives her his seat than the man in the corner, who means to offer his in case no one abdicates before she reaches his end of the vehicle.

Jack married a very ugly girl, and on meeting his friend Dick he asked: "How do you like my wife's looks?" Looking at her profile, a few yards away: "Dear me!" replied the candid friend, "she must have a lot of money."

"Young man," said a cross old lady on the top of an omnibus, "tobacco smoking don't agree with me." "It need not so me either, ma'am," replied the young man, lighting a fresh cigar; "but, there, you'll get used to it after awhile."

Miss Edith (to bashful lover)—You know it is leap year, Mr. Smith, and we ladies have a right to speak frankly. B. L. (enthused)—Oh, yes . . . . . you— Edith—Well, I wish you would cease calling. I am engaged to Mr. Brown.

A novel sight witnessed near Mt. Vernon, Me., was that of a man mowing on the ice. A portion of his farm is in swamp land, which is too wet to mow in summer, but by waiting until it freezes he is enabled to harvest a large crop of hay from it.

While Lord Rosebery's proposition was being made to reform the House of Lords, this advertisement appeared in a London paper: "Secretaryship, companion to gentleman, or any position of trust wanted by a representative of historic noble house. Unmarried. Can play organ. Unexceptionable references."

"Charlie, did you ever hear it said that if a person found a four-leaved clover and put into their shoe, the first gentleman or lady the person walked with would be either their husband or wife?" "No, never heard of it before." "Well, I found one, and put it in my shoe this morning, and you are the first one I have walked with. I wonder if it is true?"

Husband, to wife: "I've been out half the day trying to collect money, and I'm mad enough to break the furniture. It beats all how some men will put off and put off. A man who owes money and won't pay it isn't fit to associate—" Servant, opening the door: "The butcher, sorr, is down stairs with his bill." Husband: "Tell him to call again!"

The average weight of men's hearts is eleven ounces each and of women's only nine ounces. Then when they give and take, or exchange hearts, man is the loser, quality being equal. Man's average brain weighs forty-nine and a half ounces and woman's forty-four. The average weight of both lungs is for men forty-five ounces and for women thirty-two ounces.

Recent Book Issues.

"Yankee Girls in Zulu-land," by Louise Vescelius-Sheldon, is a narrative whose scope is told in its title. Three ladies—one of whom is an invalid—go to South Africa in search of health and adventure. What they see and experience is related with truly feminine interest and freshness. The book departs from the stereotype fashion of traveller tales and is so far additionally commendable. There is not a great deal either new or startling in its pages, but the various descriptions of persons and places will be read with profit and pleasure. To the great majority of American readers the section of country described is entirely unknown—to women especially—and this narrative, by one of themselves ought to be welcomed by them with double interest: first for itself and then for its author. The printing, paper, and binding, together with an abundance of beautiful pictures scattered through it, make it a perfect gem. Published by Worthington & Co., New York. For sale by Lippincott & Co. Price, $3.25.

"Master of His Fate," by Amelia E. Barr, is a story with a point. The scene and characters are English, but its interest and wisdom appeal to all classes and latitudes. The self-consequential mill-owner, Braithwaite, and his obstinate son afford an excellent theme well used by the authoress. The main idea of the novel inculcates—amid much that is charming reading in the way of love episodes and similar seasoning for good stories—that a man may rise from the ruins of favored hopes and plans to what is best in life and influence. The book is well printed and bound. Published by Dodd, Mead & Co. For sale by Lippincott & Co. Price $1.25.

Mrs. H. Lovett Cameron is known as a writer standing high among that class who may be said to give interesting stories without going very deep to accomplish it. Therefore her latest, "A Life's Mistake," just published by Lippincott, will be found as good as her best by her many admirers. Price 25 cents.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

The April number of *The Century* closes the thirty-fifth half-yearly volume. The opening article by Edward L. Wilson, the well-known photographer, is descriptive of Palestine, and is entitled "From Dan to Beersheba." It is profusely illustrated, many from photographs. "The Round-up," by Theodore Roosevelt, is illustrated by Mr. Remington. An illustrated article on "The American Inventors of the Telegraph," tells the inside story of the invention. Henry James has a paper on Robert Louis Stevenson, with a portrait, and Rev. T. T. Munger an essay on "The Works of Elisha Mulford." The present instalment of the Life of Lincoln is on "The National Uprising." George Kennan's article is on the "Russian Penal Code. Dr. Eggleston's story, "The Grayson's," has some exciting chapters, and James Lane Allen has a pathetic story of "Two Kentucky Gentlemen of the Old School," illustrated. Among the poets of the number are Edith M. Thomas, Thomas Nelson Page, and the late Emma Lazarus. The departments of "Topics of the Times," "Open Letters," and "Bric-a-brac," are likewise excellent. The Century Co., New York.

A notable feature of *The English Illustrated Magazine* for April is a historical sketch of the "Spanish Armada," the three-hundredth anniversary of the destruction of which by the English fleet is to be celebrated this year. The paper is illustrated by ten unique plates. W. Outram Tristram's paper on "Coaching Days and Coaching Ways" in this number is devoted to "The Dover Road," and is profusely illustrated by Herbert Railton and Hugh Thomson. The second of Elizabeth Balch's interesting "Glimpses of Old English Homes" describes Arundel Castle, and is profusely illustrated. Prof. W. Minto's serial, "The Meditation of Ralph Hardelot," keeps up its strong interest. Macmillan & Co., New York.

"Pain and Gain," a new story with an old ending, opens the May *Quiver* and is followed by the third paper in the series "Lift up your Heart" another third paper follows this in turn being Seward Garrett's series "The Salt of the Earth." This month's salt is Margaret Mercer, of Maryland. "The Least of These My Brethen," is a story of German philanthropy. By way of purely Sunday reading we have "The Resurrection of the Body," "Bible Trades and the Lessons they Teach," "The Lord Waiting to be Gracious," and the "Land of Far Distances," by Rev. Hugh Macmillan. On more general topics are "A Day with the Zenanas," by a correspondent in India, and "The Five Hundred Thousand Blind of China," by C. F. Gordon Cummings. There are long and short stories, and plenty of poetry, music, pictures, and short arrows pointed with telling truths. Cassell & Co., publishers, New York.

Gold Mines

are very uncertain property; for every paying mine a hundred exist that do not pay. But if you write to Hallett & Co., Portland, Maine, you will receive, free, full particulars about their new business, and learn how some have made over $50 in a single day at it. You can live at home, and earn from $5 to $25 and upwards per day wherever you are located. Both sexes; all ages. Capital not required; you are started free. Send your address and all will be proved to you.

TUMBLERS AND THEIR ORIGIN.—The glasses we now know as "tumblers" differ widely from the drinking vessels to which the name was applied. These appear to have been of metal or wood, and from their peculiar shape seem to have served as perpetual reminders to "pass the bottle." One authority says they were called "tumblers" because "they could not be set down, except on the side, when empty," and another derives their name from "their original shape, rounded at the bottom, so that they tumbled over unless they were carefully set down."

Professor Max Muller possesses a set of silver tumblers which, when emptied and placed on the table mouth downwards, immediately revert to their original position, as if asking to be refilled. They must be constructed upon the same principle as the toy known as the Tombola, or Chinese Mandarin, which, having the centre of gravity in the base, will always try to regain its original position, however much the equilibrium is disturbed.

Tumblers were probably introduced into England from Germany, for goblets of wood, rounded at the base, so that they readily tumble over, are still made in that country, and often bear an inscription which may be translated: "Lay me down when empty, I'll stand again when full."

NEWLY BUILT HOUSES.—The town of Basle, in Switzerland, has adopted a regulation which prevents newly built houses from being inhabited until four months after their completion. It would be well if such a restriction were extended to other places. The reasons for the practice are obvious. The chief objection to the early use of newly built houses lies in the great danger to health of wet walls. The quantity of water used in constructing an ordinary house of brick and mortar would surprise any one who has not investigated the subject. According to estimate, the walls of a building in which 100,000 bricks are used, such as a modern brick dwelling of medium size, will require about 10,000 gallons of water in their construction, which must be gotten rid of before the house becomes habitable. This large quantity of water is held in the pores and spaces of the bricks and mortar until dispelled in the form of vapor, which is a gradual process, unless its removal is hastened by artificial means.

THE HOUSE-CAT.—It is not exactly known where the common house-cat came from, but it is generally believed to have sprung from the cats of the ancient Egyptians. Herodotus, the famous old historian, says that they were greatly loved and tenderly cared for during life, and after death their bodies were preserved like those of human beings, and buried in tombs. Indeed, some of the old Egyptians worshipped cats, and if a boy killed one with a stone, or by setting a dog on to it, he would have probably been killed at once by the angry people. The Arabs love cats, and keep them as pets. It is an Arab tradition that when Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise, God gave to them two friends to defend and comfort them—the dog and the cat. In the body of the dog He put the soul of a brave man, and in that of the cat the spirit of a gentle and confiding woman, and this is the reason why the Arabs love these animals.

AN English justice discharged a housemaid who pleaded guilty to stealing a cloak, a muff, a fur boa and a handkerchief belonging to her mistress. The judge said that she was only "wearing" the clothes, and that was "a thing that servants did every day."

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A CONNUBIAL TRAGEDY.

They had been married three weeks, and had just begun housekeeping. He was starting for his office one morning, and she followed him to the door. They had their arms wrapped round each other, and she was saying—

"Oh, Clarence, do you think it possible that the day can ever come when we shall part in anger?"

"Why, no, little puss," he said. "Of course not; what put that foolish idea into my little birdie's head, eh?"

"Oh, nothing, dearest. I was only thinking how perfectly dreadful it would be if one of us should speak harshly to the other."

"Well, don't think of such wicked, utterly impossible things any more," he said. "We can never, never quarrel."

"I know it, darling. Good-bye, you dear old precious; good-bye, and—oh, wait a second, Clarence; I've written a note to mamma; can't you call at the house and leave it for her some time to-day?"

"Why, yes, dearie; if I have time."

"If you have time? Oh, Clarence!"

"What is it, little girlie?"

"Oh, to say if you 'have time' to do almost the very first errand your little wife asks you to do."

"Well, well, darling, I'm awfully busy now."

"Too busy to please me! Oh, Clarence, you hurt my feelings so."

"Why, child, I——"

"I'm not a child, Clarence; I'm a married woman, and I——"

"There, there, my pet. I——"

"No, no, Clarence; if I was your p—p—et, you'd t—t—ry to—to——"

"But, Mabel, do be reasonable."

"Oh, Clarence, don't speak to me so."

"Mabel, be sensible and——"

"Go on, Clarence—go on; break my heart."

"Stuff and nonsence!"

"Oh, o—o—oh!"

"What have I said or done?"

"As if you need ask! But go. Hate me if you will, Clarence; I——"

"This is rank nonsence!"

"I'll go back to mamma if you want me to. She loves me if you don't."

"You must be crazy!"

"Oh, yes, sneer at me; ridicule me. Perhaps you had better strike me!"

He bangs the door, goes down the steps, and races off, muttering something about women being the "queerest creatures."

Of course they'll make it up at night, and they'll have many such little tiffs, in the years to come; and when they are old they'll say—

"We've lived together forty-five years, and never, no never, spoken a cross word to each other in all that time."

WANTED MORE.—"The bear is a knowing animal," writes a reporter, who visited the Central Park pits, in New York, the other day; "he is a knowing animal, and when a large crowd of laughing children is gathered about to watch his antics, he is not unmindful of the responsibilities which rest on his shaggy shoulders." While the reporter was standing before the pit on Saturday, two grizzly cubs had a set-to.

Standing erect, they boxed at each other until their zeal led them to clinch, and they rolled over and over in a mad embrace. A lean black bear came along and broke up the wrestle by biting one of the cubs on the ear. Then the lean black bear paraded up and down. The reporter tossed him a marsh-mallow. It fell just outside the bars of the cage, and he looked at it curiously for a moment. The bears are used to sweetmeats in great variety; but the white and tender looking confection struck the black bear as a novelty, and he reached for it with his paw with some misgivings. The sweet morsel once in his mouth, Bruin rolled it under his tongue, and the look of perfect bliss that came over his face was delightful to behold. The candy gradually melted in his mouth, and, when it was gone, a look of sadness and regret took the place of the happy expression of a moment before. There was a yearning beam in his soft eyes that said more beseechingly than words could command: "For the love of goodness, give me some more."

A NATIONAL VICE.—Every one gambles more or less in Mexico. Booths are erected near places of public resort, in which visitors may gratify any fondness they may have for the habit. The strange, harsh cries of those who have charge of the business, as they call out the details of stakes and the result of each deal and play, are positively repulsive.

The group of players in each booth comprises men, women, and even children, of every class, in about the proportion in which the several classes exist in the country. There are small stakes and large ones, and the variety of games by which the appeal to chance is made seems endless.

The players chat and laugh as they play, and though they watch the game very closely, and if their money lasts, play sometimes all night long, there is none of that feverish or excited look about them which is noticeable elsewhere. It is evident that the Mexicans gamble entirely for the sport they find in gambling. They win or lose with the same happy look, the same gay laugh.

IN dusting, remember that old silk handkerchiefs are best for pianos. Shake the duster often while using it from door or window, and never flirt it about the furniture, as this simply sends the dust into the air to settle again in the same place. Use a damp cloth for wainscoting and the tops of doors and windows.

Humorous.

THE SIOUXS.

A wandering tribe, called the Siouxs,
Wear moccasins, having no shlouxs;
They are made of buckskin,
With one fleshy side in,
Embroidered with beads of bright hiouxs.

When out on the warpath the Siouxs
March single file—never by twiouxs—
And by blazing the trees
Can return at their ease,
Give shelter from storms and from diouxs.

The principal food of the Siouxs
Is Indian maize, which they briouxs,
Or hominy make,
Or mix a cake,
And eat it with pork as they chiouxs.

Now doesn't this spelling look clouxrious?
'Tis enough to make any one fouxrious!
So a word to the wise,—
Pray our language revise
With orthography not so injiouxrious!

—U. N. None.

An epitaph for a faithful car conductor: "He took his last fare-well."

An old bachelor's definition of a baby: A crying evil, which you only aggravate by putting down.

Most people believe in "the greatest good to the greatest number," and their greatest number is number one.

Wife: "George, do the Indians always travel in single file?" Husband: "I never saw but one, and he did."

"Isn't it dreadful," asked Miss Lillybud, "to run over a man?" "Yis, indeed, mum," replied the engineer; "it jolts the engine up wus nor a cow."

A country burying-ground has over its entrance gate the following Hibernian notice: "Only the dead who live in this district are buried here."

A cynic says: "If the ancients believed the earth was square they never could have got the idea from the dealings of its inhabitants with each other."

Old lady, to tramp who has asked for something to eat: "What kind of victuals do you mostly get when you beg a bite?" Tramp: "Cold shoulder, ma'am."

Mrs. Bjones: "I hear that young Mr. Sissy is still in search of a wife." Mrs. Jsmith: "Why, I thought he was married!" Mrs. Bjones: "So he was. She's left him. She's the one he's in search of."

Closeboy (to Boutwell to whom he has given a cigar from his private box): "A man might smoke worse cigars than these, Boutwell." Boutwell: "Yes, he (puff) might, but would he (puff, puff) dare?"

An old lady, seeing a paragraph headed "Boy Inventors," said: "Boy inventors! Well, I hope some of 'em will invent a boy that won't always be tearing his trousers and that'll stay in the house at nights."

Mr. Fitz Percy, who has been trying to render the tenor of all the hymns, to the dismay of the neighboring pewer: "I don't sing, Miss Flora." Miss Flora: "Oh, yes, Mr. Fitz Percy, you do sing; but you oughtn't to."

A youngster sat watching his mother, who was stoning cherries. She had given him several stoned ones to eat, but finally gave him one without removing the stone. He at once handed it back to her with the remark: "Here's one you didn't unbutton, mamma."

In a country printing office. Editor to compositor: "How in the world should you spell pneumonia?" "Give it up," said the compositor, after several attempts. "Why don't you look in the dictionary?" "Because I'm sitting on it," replied the editor, "and don't want to disturb myself. Never mind, I'll say he died of some disease that's easier to spell!"

A shoemaker received a note from a lady to whom he was particularly attached requesting him to make her a pair of shoes, and not knowing exactly the style she required, he dispatched a written missive to her "whether she would have them Wround or Esq. Toad." The fair one, indignant at this specimen of orthography, replied: "Knosther."

It was Wonderful.—Here is a true story about learning and—the other thing. I musn't be so rude, says the party telling it, as to call it ignorance when a lady is concerned, and especially not when she is a lady of title. The Duchess of Q. went to Greenwich to see the marvels of the Observatory. (It wasn't the Duchess of Q., and it wasn't Greenwich: but no matter.) It was night; and for the Duchess's benefit the great telescope was levelled at some of the greatest glories of the sky. The Duchess was extremely delighted.

"What is the name of that star?" she asked, pointing to a bright one.

"That," said the attendant astronomer, "is Aldebaran, and it is a star of the first magnitude."

"And how far is it from us?" asked her Grace.

"About six or seven light-years," replied Learning.

"Light-years! What is a light-year?"

"A light-year," answered the astronomer, "is an expression which I use to signify the distance which light travels over in one year. Light travels at the rate of 190,000 miles in one second. There are, roughly, 31,536,000 seconds in a year. In one year, therefore, light travels about five million nine hundred and ninety-one thousand eight hundred and forty millions of miles. The expression 'light-year' means all those figures; and you may multiply them by six."

"And that star is all those miles away?" asked the Duchess.

"It is; as nearly as we can calculate."

"Well; all I can say is," declared her Grace, "that you must have wonderfully good eyes to make out the star's name at that distance, even with this big telescope! It's really marvellous!"

Its Origin.—The origin of the phrase, "The bloody shirt," is in a Corsican custom, now nearly, if not quite obsolete. In the days of the fierce *vendetta*—the feuds which divided Corsican family from family—bloodshed was a common occurrence. Before the burial of the murdered man the *gridata* was celebrated. This word, which literally means a crying aloud, may be translated "a wake."

The body of the victim was laid upon a plank; his useless firearms were placed near his hand, and his blood-stained shirt was hung above his head. Around the rude bier sat a circle of women, wrapped in their black mantles, who rocked themselves to and fro with strange wailings. The men, relatives and friends of the murdered man, fully armed, stood around the room, mad with thirst for revenge.

Then one of the women—the wife or sister or mother of the dead man—with a sharp scream would snatch the bloody shirt, and, waving it aloft, begin the *vocero*—the lamentation. This rythmic discourse was made up of alternate expressions of love for the dead and hatred of his enemies; and its startling images and tremendous curses were echoed in the faces and mutterings of the armed mourners.

It was by a not unnatural transition that the phrase "bloody shirt" became applied to utterances concerning the South.

In the private journal of a lady recently deceased were found these words: "I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good thing that I can show to my fellow-creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." These words are worthy to be placed where we can see them every day. Each day, each week, each year comes but once.

These are the matrimonial experiences of the daughter of a Parisian wine dealer: 1. Married a singer. 2. She ran off with an actor. 3. Divorced. 4. Married an ex-priest. 5. She eloped. 6. Divorced. 7. Married a mayor's son, the officiating magistrate being her second husband, who showed no ill-feeling, and joined in the subsequent festivities after delivering a touching exhortation to the happy couple.

Le Comte Gaston d'Orgue de Barbari (appealing)—Madame is Countesse! How grand eet sound, ees eet not so? Miss Smith—Really, Monsieur le Comte, I prefer to remain plain Miss Smith. Le Comte Gaston, etc.—Plain Mees Smeet! mille fois non! Zay razzer se beauteeful Mees Smeet! She succumbs.

Child—"Grandpa, how old are you?" Grandpa—"I am seventy-seven years old, my dear." Child—"Then you was born seventy years before I was?" Grandpa—"Yes, my little girl." Child—"Law, what a long time you had to wait for me!"

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PHILADELPHIA, APRIL 9, 1888.

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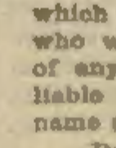

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Latest Fashion Phases.

Only a few spring novelties are, as yet, to be seen, but some houses are already showing the new wooling fabrics for spring dresses; capital models of demi-saison mantles may be noted here and there, and the milliners have something more than the usual exhibition of spring flowers to prove to their *clientele* that the spring is, if not come, at any rate not far off.

The mantles alluded to are made of fancy striped and chequered cloth, chiefly in pretty pale shades of gray and beige; they are very long, with straight fronts and long straight overmantles, or sleeves, falling to the edge of the vetement, and trimmed with one row of wide braid to match, or with pointed tabs, also made of wide braid.

The full back is either gathered on below the waist, or cut in princess shape with the bodice apart, and arranged in pleats a little below the waist; in either case a portion of the full skirt is draped like a pointed hood, and falls in graceful coquille folds down the centre.

In some models the braid trimming is carried over the shoulders, and forms a point at the waist behind.

Long cloth mantles are also made with hanging pointed sleeves, in three layers one above the other, like the capes on redingotes.

Stripes, spots, and broche patterns take the lead in woolen materials; beige, ecru, bois de violette, wood browns, and a great variety of half tints promise to be the most fashionable ground colors; but brighter shades, such as red, blue, etc., are introduced in the stripes and patterns.

None of these colors are very bright, however, and they are employed in small quantities only, and are so skilfully blended with the ground color that the result is quiet, ladylike, and very pleasing to the eye.

The stripes are either very narrow or of moderate width; heather mixtures are effectively used as stripes on a beige ground, and stripes in plain color, alternating twilled or diagonal stripes in the same shade, mixed with a lighter color, are also amongst the novelties.

Spots are small, and more often than not combined with stripes in the same material; raised stripes in uncut pile, and in fine silk cord effects, are also likely to be fashionable.

There is nothing specially striking and novel about these fabrics, but there is no doubt that they will make very pretty and ladylike costumes, and that, on the whole, is more desirable than startling effects.

The woolen broches are, however, distinctly new, and for a certain class of costumes, and of wearers, they will be in requisition.

These materials are in rather large Oriental patterns, and in Oriental colorings, and are not, therefore, very easy to make up and wear.

It is not likely that they will ever become very cheap, or very largely used, for although the patterns are vague, and the many different colors blended in such a scientific manner that there is nothing glaring about them, yet it will take some time before our women, who have become accustomed to much simpler designs, will accept these larger patterns and brighter colors.

Many of the broches are beautiful, from the artistic point of view, but the difficulty of making them up becomingly will stand in the way of their general acceptance.

Meanwhile, dresses of plain cloth are both safe and becoming to wear, and many of the best models are made in lovely colors, such as vieux rose, Gobelins blue, slate and silver gray, etc., and are trimmed with silver braid.

One such dress has a draped skirt of Gobelins blue cloth, open on one side to disclose a panel of cloth in a lighter shade of blue, ornamented down the centre with rows of silver braid.

The corsage has revers of the darker cloth, trimmed with braid, and opens over a light plastron, also trimmed with braid.

Cloth, ornamented with gold or silver braid, is also much used for dinner dresses, and for ball toilettes for married ladies, combined with very rich brocade, either in large floral or conventional patterns, or in wide stripes.

A handsome dress of this description has a skirt of cream cloth, beautifully embroidered at the edge with gold, and the train and corsage of vieux rose brocade.

An effort is being made to introduce a rather bright shade of blue, to be called Alexandra blue, on account of its being nearly the same shade as that worn by the Princess of Wales at the time of her marriage, but it remains to be seen whether the attempt will be a success or not; vieux rose, coral pink, and pale shades of green are indisputably fashionable shades, and will be seen in best dresses, and in dinner and ball toilettes throughout the season.

Tulle ball dresses in two shades, especially in pink and green, draped and stripped with satin ribbon in the two shades are still popular, but less so than the pure white tulle dresses in which girls always look well.

For these dresses the foundation is usually of satin, which is more effective than silk, and in many cases the front is draped with tulle embroidered with gold in delicate sprays, or striped with ribbon, or else a material combining gold embroidery and satin ribbon in alternative stripes is employed.

The pointed opening is generally preferred for the bodies of ball dresses; if very low, it is filled in with a gathered chemisette of crepe lisse or silk gauze; but, as a rule, draperies of tulle on both sides, or a tulle drapery on one side, and an arrangement of ribbon and flowers on the other, are all that is needed.

Ornaments for the hair in the way of decorative hair-pains, small combs and back combs are, if possible, more fashionable than ever. The back combs, the newest comer in this line of goods, will be cut for the spring trade in novel pattern. The prongs of both combs and pins are variously made of amber and dark-colored tortoise shell or of silver and of gold. The shell prongs are perhaps most popular with their ornamental tips or gold or silver.

Numbered with novelties are the imported "gold bird brooches." These brooches come in a series. No. 1 simulates in gold a single owl on a branch, and is called "Single Blessedness." No. 2 shows on a somewhat larger branch two owls, and is known as "Matrimonial Bliss" brooch.

No. 3, is termed "Happy Family" pin, is represented by a branch with three offshoots on which sit the parent birds and one tiny baby owl.

In Paris, if we may believe all we hear, diamond mouse jewelry is competing with diamond flies and birds. We are also told that some of the extravagant French women are wearing a trimming of tiny diamonds on their gloves in place of the conventional stitching on the back.

We are furthermore assured that fancy walking sticks promise to become fashionable among ladies.

The English fashion of silver finger rings prevails in New York to a large extent, and among both sexes.

These rings are for the most part fanciful in design, and the more costly ones are set with gems.

There is an endless variety in gold finger rings. Jeweled hoops and the marquise shape are popular styles, as is the cluster. It goes without the telling that no lady's collection of finger rings is complete without at least one solitaire ring.

Odds and Ends.

THE HOME WINDOW.

For the home window not so much dainty laces or costly shades is needed as the plant life, green and blossoming, the finest art of all, for it is nature's very own and inimitable.

How many times have we stood admiring the lovely blossoms inside some cottage window with its old-fashioned panes of glass, its wealth, the bloom that pressed ambitiously toward the sunlight and radiant in its beauty. No artist's window could outrival it.

It is an easy thing to procure the plants best adapted to house culture and those most likely to render satisfaction. It is not easy, quite, to be successful until experience gives the best and most practical knowledge. But many plants are beautiful, easy of culture, and will afford the utmost satisfaction.

Geraniums are easily grown, and where the windows are large and sunlight plenty, with care and daily attention will give a wealth of bloom.

Only the best should be kept, however, and not too many of one kind. Lilies, especially of the amaryllis species, give constant bloom and afford variety.

If hyacinths are potted in the fall and kept cool and dark until showing life, and then given light and warmth but gradually, they will give fine spikes of bloom, and good varieties can be easily obtained. The dark shades, bright yellows and reds, as well as the more dainty colors, give satisfaction.

If a bay-window is used, it is pleasant work to arrange the plants, and will give almost daily delight. Fine taste can be exercised here, and a dainty work of art will be the result.

While the season is long and the days cold and cheerless, and many a one kept indoors by ill health or family cares there is real pleasure in the culture of plant life and its study.

It is a good thing for the young people to grow up within its influence, and will lead oftimes to an interest in and love for the beautiful things God has made.

Parents need to think well of the home influences, as much will depend upon the early formation of character whose foundation is laid within the home.

It is needful to make home beautiful and so attractive that no outside influences need lure from its safeguard the young soul open to each passing fancy.

The child whose home has been used to the refining influence of flowers, and whose interest has been awakened in the same, will bear the impress through after years.

Let the home window be bright, then, with nature's handiwork. Give the child some part and parcel of it for its very own, and teach it the nature and treatment of the plant itself, and be very sure the love for it will grow with its growth, to blossom and bear fruit in the years to come.

Cold Meat Dish.—Take any kind of cold meat and suet, chop very fine, add salt, onions, minced ham or tongue, a slice of bread soaked in milk, two well-beaten eggs, one ounce of butter, stew altogether gently for fifteen minutes; turn it into a mould, and bake till brown. Turn out on a hot dish, and pour round the gravy which was strained off when put in the mould.

Oatmeal Cakes or Bannocks.—Take for each cake two handfuls of coarse oatmeal, and a small piece of dripping, add a good pinch of salt, and moisten in a bowl with boiling water; turn out on a board sprinkled with oatmeal, and knead out with the knuckles of the hand, shaping at the same time. Bake on a girdle for about five minutes to harden, and then toast on a toaster before the fire until quite hard and nicely browned on both sides.

Cecils.—Mince very fine four tablespoonfuls of any kind of cold meat, and put it into a saucepan with an equal weight of grated bread-crumbs, one chopped onion, three boned anchovies, a little salt and pepper, half a teaspoonful of chopped lemonrind, a dessertspoonful of minced parsley, and a piece of butter. Mix over the fire for a few minutes, then take them off, and when cool, add the yoke of an egg. Form the mixture into small balls, dip them in beaten egg and bread crumbs, and fry till they become a light brown. Serve with brown gravy.

Beef Olives.—A very useful joint for a large family is nine or ten pounds of the top side of the round of beef, the part from which prime buttock steaks are cut. It yields plentiful and delicious gravy. When the joint is served hot, some of the gravy should, if possible, be set by for the olives. If this is not at hand, some stock must be made in the usual way, or failing that a small quantity of the soup sold in tins, say ox tail, makes a very good substitute. Cut your cold beef into slices as evenly as you can, and about four inches square. Make a plain forcemeat with a cupful of bread-crumbs, a teaspoonful of mixed herbs finely pounded, and a little pepper and salt. Mix into a mass with a little milk; with a knife spread a little forcemeat over each slice of meat, roll it up neatly, and tie it round with cotton, or fasten with a small skewer. Place these rolls in a stewpan with an ounce of butter, and braise them a nice brown. Pour away any fat that may remain, dredge a little flour into the bottom of the pan, let it brown but not burn, then cover the olives with some stock. Bring it quickly to the boiling point, then add a small onion, a carrot, a turnip cut into dice, and a little celery. The outside pieces from a head of celery do admirably, as it is only the flavor that is required, and the celery itself should be removed before serving. Add a few peppercorns tied in a piece of muslin, and salt to taste. If tinned soup is used instead of stock, less vegetables will be required. Let the whole simmer gently for an hour. Take up the olives, remove the skewers of cotton securing them, place them on a hot dish in the oven. If the gravy is not sufficiently thick, add a little flour rolled in butter, or mixed with a tablespoonful of walnut or mushroom ketchup. Pour over the olives, and serve. Garnished with young carrots, or enclosed in a wall of snowy mashed potatoes, this dish makes a very presentable *entree*. It may also be made with fresh meat, when it would take two and a half hours' gentle stewing.

Confidential Correspondents.

R. E. X.—A man becomes of age on the day before his 21st birthday anniversary, and he is entitled to vote on that day. Being under 22 he may vote without paying tax.

VERE DE VERE.—The sooner you forget all about such a very fickle person, the better for your happiness. A man who could act in such a manner, deceiving two girls, and evidently intending no good to either, is not worth a second thought from any right-minded young woman.

DAVID.—The epithet on Keats' tomb was written by himself, "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." It is intended to convey an idea of the fleeting nature of his fame, in which he was mistaken, for it is more firmly established to-day, and the poet himself is better known than when he was alive.

MARINE.—The examination necessary for admission to the Naval Academy is very thorough and trying. It requires abilities and attainments of a very high order to succeed. Write to the Congressman from your district for papers bearing on the method of application, etc. He will send you full information.

MARY.—You may clean white fur by brushing it well to free it from dust; then rubbing in some hot flour, or starch in fine powder. It should be applied with a pad of cotton wool, and renewed as it becomes soiled. Finally, a small cane should be used for beating the fur to remove the powder. Hot bran is good for very dirty furs, or where the hair is of great length.

FAIR FACE.—No girl, with any respect for herself or the man she is engaged to, would encourage the attentions of another man; and no true gentleman would press his society upon any girl whom he know to be engaged to another. Her affianced husband should know how to deal with him if his conduct is disagreeable to the lady; if she approves of it she is hardly worth troubling about.

TURIEL.—Diaper-work in architecture, in mural painting, and in decorative art generally, is the covering of a flat surface, which might otherwise have a bald appearance, with a repeated floral or arabesque pattern. The diaper is often used in heraldic painting to relieve and vary fields of white and black. Distemper was a method of painting in use in the middle ages, with pigments ground up with size, weak glue, gum water, or other liquid than oil.

VIOLET.—We are afraid we must advise you not to be like your little namesake, but to try and overcome your shyness. You must try to obey your father's wishes, especially as you are his only child. Go into company. Take part in conversation. The way to speak clearly is to think clearly, and to be quite sure what you mean to say before you say it. This is only to be obtained by practice, and you cannot very well practice conversation alone. Never mind how much pain and confusion it may cost you at first—only persevere.

JANEY.—1. The coin called a "bawbee" was a copper halfpenny, struck in the year 1514, in remembrance of the year-old baby-heir of James IV. of Scotland, who fell in the battle of Flodden Field. "Bawbee" meant "baby," the coin bearing the effigy of the infant king. 2. We never heard that beetles were deaf; the "beetles" referred to in the saying, "As deaf as a beetle," otherwise rendered "As deaf as a post," meant large wooden mallets used for driving wedges into wood to split them, so making a deafening sound.

L. M. N.—Involuntary blushing is a very common complaint among young men and women of sanguine and nervous temperaments, and is the cause of much real mental distress. It must be remembered that the action itself is a purely involuntary one. The only and the true remedy for such persons to overcome the habit of self-consciousness is to force the mind away from the contemplation of self, and to avoid sensitiveness to the opinions or considerations of others. Medical treatment is of no use for what is only an excess of a natural feeling.

K. N. — The Primrose League is an organization for the diffusion of Conservative principles in England, especially through the agency of its lady members. It was originated in 1883, in memory of the late Earl of Beaconsfield, and was called the Primrose League because on the anniversary of his death every member wears a bunch of primroses. The members are styled knights or dames, according to sex, and the branches or lodges are known as habitations. The League is not confined to that country, but has ramifications in India, Malta, Cyprus, Australia, Hong Kong, etc.

SOUGHT.—The fair sex found their right to propose in Leap Year, and if not accepted, to claim a silk dress, on an incident in the life of St. Patrick. The good saint was one day stretching his legs on the shores of Lough Neagh, having "driven the frogs out of the bogs," when he was accosted by St. Bridget in tears. The cause of her trouble was a mutiny which had broken out in the nunnery over which she presided, the ladies claiming the right of "popping the question." St. Patrick promised to concede them the right every seventh year; upon which St. Bridget threw her arms around his neck, and exclaimed, "Arrah, Patrick, jewel, I daurn't go back to the girls wid such a proposal. Make it one in four." St. Patrick replied, "Bridget, acushla, do that again, an' I'll give ye Leap Year, the longest of the lot." Whereupon the lady proposed to the saint himself, who of course was unable to accept the offer, and solved the difficulty with a kiss and a silk gown.

VEGETUS.—We are always loath to reply in a discouraging way to man who believe as you do; but we cannot neglect physiological facts. Why has a man canine teeth? Every point in his organization proves that he is meant to eat and assimilate flesh; and we do not see how you can expect to arrest his development. In truth however, your side have so many cogent arguments that reasonable men must be content in saying, "The whole matter depends on personal preference." The gentle Hindoo is a vegetarian, and he lives healthily; his fierce conqueror is a flesh-eater, and he lives healthily. What is the use of the two parties pelting each other? It would be much better for them to agree to differ. We despise a robust beef-eater who contemns vegetarians as effeminate, because he shows that he does not understand their arguments; but, on the other hand, we cannot allow the majority of our countrymen to be termed brutal by the vegetarians. Individual constitution must decide the question at every point.